Women Who Laugh

Ella M. Powell

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ELLA M. POWELL.

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BY

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THE TRANSATLANTIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
NEW YORK
63 FIFTH AVENUE
LONDON
26 HENRIETTA ST., COVENT GARDEN

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WOMEN WHO LAUGH

CHAPTER I.

THE steamer cabin was rapidly filling with passengers. To avoid the inconvenience of an early morning start they had come aboard the night before. Some were seated quietly in the sombre corners, pensive over the coming separation from loved ones. Others, in groups here and there, chatted gayly of anticipated pleasures.

At one of the tables "The Dane" sat steadily writing, undisturbed by the coming and going. Not until a bevy of school-girls entered, noisy in their light-heartedness, did he find himself

vanquished. A faint smile lingered about his face as he quietly gathered up his writing-materials and strolled away. At the end of the room he raised his eyes, for the first time, and gave a passing glance at Evlyn Dole, who sat almost hidden behind the great baskets and bouquets of flowers before her. She was a young woman of twenty-five summers. Her beauty was not of the exterior, but of the mind and heart. To hear her speak, to see her face light with its varied and wonderful expression, was at once to feel her magnetism. In the casual crowd she would pass unnoticed—to know her was to love her. She just escaped being a belle. She was more—a woman with a purpose. Her only travelling companion was a matronly lady. The two were bound for Paris—Evlyn to study music, Mrs. Grey, her chaperon, as

foreign correspondent for a New York daily.

When they were fairly on their journey, Evlyn found her deck-neighbors to be Mrs. Grey on one side and "The General" on the other. She knew he was "The General" by hearing him so saluted. She thought his military bearing merited the appellation if his distinction did not; but she was sure he had the latter, for every one was so deferential. He attracted attention and excited comment as he walked the deck. His face was classic, his hair iron-gray. He was termed "handsome, *distingué*, well-preserved" —Evlyn added to herself, "fastidious," when he drew out his handkerchief and she detected perfume. The arm of her steamer-chair touched his. She felt herself in very distinguished company, and respectfully leaned towards Mrs.

Grey to give his great fur steamer-rug plenty of space. Occasionally she felt him looking at her. Then she would take her eyes from the monotonous waves and lower them to her book. He took notice of every movement, and endeavored to catch her every word to Mrs. Grey.

"I wonder what island that is off there," remarked Evlyn. Mrs. Grey did not know.

"I beg pardon, that is still the coast-line," interposed "The General," suavely.

Evlyn received his information with thanks and a modest smile. It was her habit to smile, and she talked always up, never down. This rising inflection, coupled with her sweetness of voice, gave a peculiar charm to her conversation. "The General" was delighted at the opportunity of speaking to her.

He was quite aware that ship-board etiquette would permit him to do so, but he would have it done *comme il faut*. He was known as a "polished gentleman." Further developments proved him to be not only a general, but one of Wall Street's greatest financiers. His name was prominent in great enterprises. Among his fellows he was a leader. On Sundays he passed the plate in one of the most fashionable churches of the city. There, on touching occasions, he was seen to close his eyes, smooth his hand over his face, meditatively, seeming to be lifted up by the organ notes. When he opened his eyes again they were filled with tears.

"The General" had made up his mind to know Evlyn, who and what she was. He was a great ladies' man. Also, being clever, he was accustomed

to having things much his own way, and hence soon found himself chatting agreeably, first with Mrs. Grey, then with Evlyn.

"And so you are going to Paris to study music? Ah! my young friend, beware!" said "The General" in a tender, fatherly tone. "There isn't one American girl out of a hundred who goes to the old country to study who comes back the same."

"I don't understand you," Evlyn replied innocently. He glanced at her quickly, scrutinizingly.

"Where do you live?" he went on abruptly.

"In L——, only a small town."

Her nature had not been contaminated by association with so-called high society of city life. The simplicity of her surroundings and the fragrance of the honeysuckle that clambered over her

piazza had left their impress on her child-like nature. In years only was she a woman. Only by the plaintive expression of her large brown eyes would one imagine she had suffered. She never complained, and her smile was a blessing wherever she went. Many, who in reality suffered much less than she, sought her for solace in their woes.

"I mean they are never the same," repeated "The General." "They go there innocent, away from home influences; they come back wise and beyond control."

Evlyn's face wore a puzzled expression. Just then the sea-breeze blew a stray lock of hair athwart her forehead.

"I see you do not yet understand," he said, lowering his voice to a mellow tone, at the same time taking the stray

lock and confining it to its place. At this act Evlyn was confused. The color rushed to her cheeks; just why she couldn't tell. He was an elderly man, giving her fatherly advice; he must have daughters of his own; he did not mean to be familiar, only absent-mindedly kind. She turned her eyes suddenly to his with an inquisitive, penetrating look. He returned it with an expression strange to her. She never forgot it. There was a moment's silence. Evlyn looked out to sea. "The General," with a faint smile, began again:

"Most American girls do and say many things abroad that they would not dare do at home; consequently they gain for themselves an unenviable reputation. They would become broad-minded, but instead they acquire loose manners. Their curiosity gives

them a desire for forbidden fruit, and the taste left in their mouth is hard to get rid of. When you have lived in Paris a while you will understand."

"But why," inquired Evlyn, "do you mention specially the girls who go to study?"

"Because study is generally the object of the American girl abroad. The girls are often in a measure unprotected —left to do as they will. Not being accustomed to the world, they are easily misled, and many a ruined life is the result. Especially in your line is it dangerous. The artistic people live generally in the bohemian world. This sphere ignores many conventionalities of society's code. One's environments are very apt to leave their effects on the disposition. Musical people are known to have more intense natures than ordinary beings, therefore they

are more impetuous and more apt to get into trouble. I repeat to you, beware and watch."

Somehow his words made Evlyn uncomfortable. She wished he would change the subject—she comprehended vaguely.

"Poor Mrs. Grey is so sea-sick," she said, as if suddenly reminded. "I must go down and see her."

As Evlyn made an effort in this direction, the ship rolled to the side and she was precipitated to its edge. "The General" was quick to the rescue. At the landing of the stairs she quietly drew away from him. His manner made her more uncomfortable than his words.

"Thank you, I can walk alone now," she said pleasantly, and turned towards her state-room.

"The General" watched her until she

had disappeared. "I have made a mistake," he said to himself.

On board "The Dane" was nicknamed "The Great Unknown." He was also called "The Dane," because he was registered from Denmark, and his real name was hard to pronounce. He was seen always alone, with his pipe for a companion. He never associated with the men in the smoking-room, took friendly drinks with them, or bought pools on the steamer's mileage. For hours he would sit at the bows, puffing his pipe and looking across the sea. He took notice of no one, seemingly as oblivious to the several hundred passengers as if he were the sole occupant of the vessel.

At meals he sat at the table with Evlyn; but, as she was generally served on deck, she seldom saw him. On occasions when she had been there he

would incline his head respectfully on taking his seat, eat steadily, and quietly leave before the others had fairly begun. Several times he was seen to smile, without raising his eyes from his plate, at some original remark of Evlyn's.

One night she had occasion to go on deck, after every one was supposed to have retired, to search for some valuable she had left there. She suddenly ran upon two men in close conversation. It was dark, but the moon gave sufficient light for her to recognize them as "The General" and "The Dane." "The General" was in a measure confused at her unexpected appearance, while "The Dane" retained his usual indifferent demeanor, and turned and sauntered away.

The next day, as Evlyn and "The General" were chatting, "The Dane" passed by.

"Who is that curious man?" asked Evlyn.

"I really don't know; some crank I suppose. Speaking of literature——"

"But you were talking with him last evening as if you were old acquaintances," Evlyn interrupted. "Men are such queer creatures. They meet like the birds in the trees and talk without ceremony. It is nothing unusual for a man to stop another, a stranger, and ask for a light. If he is a sharper, he may look like a gentleman; he not only gets a light, but an extra cigar and oftentimes a drink. I enjoy studying human nature, but as yet I am a novice in the line."

"I see you observe closely. You will find some startling developments as you go along which will make you none the happier!"

"You are rather severe on mankind."

"Because in the abstract I know them."

Evlyn wondered if he had had any great disappointment in life. Several times he had shown a tendency to cynicism. She had been totally unable to find out anything about his private relationships. In regard to them he kept his own counsel, and his friends guessing.

"How strange you have never married!" Evlyn ventured suddenly.

"Life is full of enigmas," was his evasive reply, and he again returned to "literature." They had most interesting conversations on the latter subject. "The General" was a learned man and a good talker. He had done much towards varying the monotony of the trip for Evlyn. Since he had discovered how very sensitive and prudent she was, he had been most careful

both of his speech and manner. Now that he was going to land in England, and she was bound for France, Evlyn regretted the separation. His courteousness had done much to obliterate her first uncomfortable impression of him. He was extremely fascinating, and she felt somewhat flattered at the attention of such a man.

They had reached the English port. The ladies straightened themselves out of their laziness and curled their bangs, presenting an agreeable metamorphosis, while the gentlemen were scarcely recognizable after putting away their négligés and steamer-caps for fresh linen and silk hats. It was sunset. A peculiar haze hung like a veil over the face of nature, softening her features. A flood of light from the great red sun lit the green shores and myriad shipmasts with an illusive glow. They

looked like phantom ships anchored in the harbor of Heavenly Rest.

"Good-bye," said "The General" with a tone of regret, while holding Evlyn's hand in a firm grasp. "You are a pure, good woman—jewels rare in this time. Be true to your mother's religion, and watch! We will meet again."

CHAPTER II.

LIFE had begun in earnest for Evlyn in Paris. She had come all the way from America to study music and French. She had read the advertisement—"French pension, five francs a day; only French spoken." She accepted the place, to find the five francs almost doubled by the pourboires, the house filled with Americans, and heard but little French spoken, save by the servants. She, Mrs. Grey, and the Frenchwoman who kept the pension were about the only busy members of the household. There were a lot of restless, unhappy Americans, abroad just for the name and pleasure of being there, or else to escape some

family unpleasantness. Out of the household of twenty-five persons, five were wives whose husbands were at home, working hard to earn money for them and their extravagant daughters to spend in Paris, paving the way to conjugal alienation. They were people with little artistic taste, hence they occupied themselves with watching the dry-goods bargain columns of the Bon Marché and the Louvre, doing a little superficial sight-seeing, visiting, and gossiping among themselves.

Evlyn was a general favorite. She had no part in their petty jealousies and boarding-house quarrels, and had a wonderful way of getting along with people. She did it by being kind and pleasant to all, but familiar with none, and by keeping in mind the command, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." If

there was any real fun to be had, Evlyn was the leader; if there were any fallings-out to be adjusted, she was the peacemaker. Often the questions were put to her, "Did you ever lose your temper?"—"Were you ever blue?"

There had not been one being during her whole life to whom she had confided her sorrows, and she began to suffer when only a child. Before she could fully comprehend and reason there was often a heavy feeling in her heart. Childish pleasures did not bring the joys to her as to other children who had happier homes.

Now each morning the question confronted her, "With whom shall I study, which is best?" Each master had his partisans and his enemies. It was hard to decide. Like many American girls she had gone with the idea of studying with "The Great Madame,"

as she was generally called, a woman of title, wealth, and a disagreeable disposition. Evlyn had been warned against her. It was said she was heartlessly mercenary, charging thirty francs for a half-hour lesson, often giving the pupil ten minutes of that time, but demanding full payment. She had ruined more voices than she had made. Evlyn decided, however, to see for herself. An interview, she argued, could do no harm. Accordingly she took a letter of introduction, given her by an old and famous pupil of "The Great Madame's," and with Mrs. Grey went to call upon the celebrated teacher.

A brass-buttoned boy in red waistcoat answered the bell: "Have you written for an audience with madame?" he said with a lordly air, in answer to her inquiry whether "Madame" was at home.

"This letter will explain," replied Evlyn, at which his menial majesty waived them in with a sullen air.

One half hour passed before "The Great Madame" entered. Stopping in the doorway she said, in a grating voice, "Have you written for an audience with me?"

"We did not know it to be your custom, madame." Evlyn rose as she spoke.

The madame left Evlyn standing and took a seat on the opposite side of the room.

"What is your business?" she questioned after a moment's deliberation.

"To have my voice cultivated," Evlyn said, embarrassed, and seating herself beside Mrs. Grey without invitation. Then followed a catechism between the two.

"Where are you from?"

"America."

"Do you intend to go on the stage?"

"That depends."

"When you have come so far, you should know what you are here for. How long do you intend to remain?"

"That depends again, madame."

"And again I repeat you should have decision of purpose."

"I do not know if my talent will warrant, or my means permit me to remain. I came to you to find out. My mother is a widow and I have many responsibilities."

"Ah! I understand, but my class is full; I can only give you a place in that of my assistant. Economy and responsibilities are not conducive to the making of a great singer. I require my pupils to dress well, look well, be well, and be absolutely without care.

The mind and body affect the voice. The voice and personal appearance affect the public. If you have no means, there are rich men in Paris who will assist you. In the meantime you can consider the matter."

Mrs. Grey had risen to her feet before the madame had finished her sentence. Taking Evlyn by the arm, she started towards the door, just as the madame passed out without an adieu. She motioned to the boy in the red waistcoat as much as to say, "Show those creatures out!"

"And this is the woman," said Mrs. Grey, when they were once more in the street, "to whose care so many American mothers send their innocent daughters! I could not believe all I heard of her. I supposed the slurs to be in a measure the result of prejudice. I no longer doubt the rumor that her

best friend is the mistress of France's greatest musical composer."

Thus at her very first step Evlyn began to realize the meaning of "The General's" words of warning. She was not discouraged, but dazed, from her interview with "The Great Madame." She had insulted her majesty by not paying her the deference of writing for "an audience." Then, too, it happened to be one of her moody days.

Evlyn had been warned against foreign men, in that they had the reputation of having less respect for womankind than Americans. She had rather expected the disagreeable from them, instead of from her own sex.

"I will go to Monsieur le Maestro," she decided, "be he what he may he cannot be more disagreeable than 'The Great Madame.'"

After her unpleasant experience it

was with trepidation that she went to call upon the Maestro, but his first smile, his grasp of the hand, placed her at ease. He was kindly, and his words sympathetic. He gave her confidence, and she felt sure of success.

Though Evlyn could endure much without outward expression of distress, yet her sensitive nature suffered, in reality, none the less. She had long since believed with the Theosophists that "thoughts are things," and felt their effect, for good or evil, as strongly as a kindly cup of water offered when thirsty, or a blow in the face from an enemy. From the beginning she and Monsieur le Maestro were friends. In appearance and elegance of manner, he was much like "The General," and in age some years his junior.

To know Monsieur le Maestro was to know his dead wife. Her death ten

years before had been his only grief in life. Unlike most men, he had cherished her memory and brooded over his loss until his melancholy had become morbid and chronic. He took no interest in the world or its ways, and found but few people compensating. He taught to divert, in a measure, his mind, and fill weary days until he should gladly go and lie down in a wakeless sleep by the side of his *femme* in the quiet vault.

With his pupils he endeavored to be cheerful, but there was always an undercurrent of sadness. There was a time when he had been not only "the man of Paris," but "the tenor of the age." Thousands crowded to hear him, while he received his own price. All this had now materialized into medals, diplomas, crowns of gold, laurel, and badges of the Legion of Honor, con-

stant reminders around his studio of his fame and glory. He was modest and seldom spoke of himself or of his success. His pride was in his pupils. He felt sure there was a great future for Evlyn, if only she could keep her health. She had never been robust. When her ambition would inspire her to leap, her physical weakness compelled her to crawl.

There came into her life at the French pension a young woman about thirty, who bore the name of Mademoiselle Plançon. She occupied the room next to Evlyn, with a connecting door, and therefore Evlyn knew much of her comings and goings. She was a shapely blonde of the fairest type, vulgarly termed "a beauty." Her eyes had a morose, rebellious expression, and her lips closed firmly as if refusing to speak. It was the expression alone

which marred the picture; her figure was perfect.

To the curious women of the house she was a conundrum, and afforded much material for gossip. They questioned the madame of the pension about her. The former said she knew nothing except that she was peaceable and paid her board regularly and without complaint—the only requisites she made of her boarders.

No one ever called on Mademoiselle Plançon. She seemed to be alone in the world, and without friends. On entering the dining-room she would bow alone to the madame of the house. At first several of her neighbors at table ventured a pleasant remark to her, but she only replied in monosyllables, showing no disposition to enter into a conversation, or even the exchange of casual remarks. She never

arose until noon, and seldom went out until dark. It was the rarest occurrence that she remained at home during the evening. The *concierge* said she went alone, and returned alone.

Several times when Evlyn had been up late, after the lights were out, and had heard Mademoiselle Plançon coming in, she opened her door to let the light from her lamp brighten the dark passageway. Mademoiselle Plançon felt the kindness. She saw, after a time, that it was only kindness, for Evlyn intruded no remark; she had no prying curiosity. She saw two things, that Mademoiselle Plançon was an unhappy woman, and that she wished to be unknown. Without sharing the unkind surmises and criticisms of the pension boarders Evlyn often wondered who and what this lone woman was. She was more charitable than the others,

and gave her the benefit of the doubt. She looked so miserable that Evlyn could not help having sympathy for her.

One cold night Mademoiselle Plançon came in late, to find both her fuel and fire out. It was one of the nights on which Evlyn had left the door open to light the passage for her. There were no servants to be had at that hour. Mademoiselle Plançon hesitated a moment and then rapped timidly on Evlyn's door, asking if she would be good enough to lend her some fuel until the morning. From that moment her manner was softened towards Evlyn, but to the others she maintained a rigid exterior. From time to time they had little chats through the thin partitions of the door between their rooms, and once when Evlyn had flowers sent her, she shared

them with Mademoiselle Plançon. Whenever the latter would look at or talk to Evlyn, the severe expression of her face would soften, and then she was indeed beautiful. In moments of forgetful naturalness, Evlyn found Mademoiselle Plançon to be a woman of unusual intellect and accomplishments, combined with a fascinating manner. Then interest was added to her sympathy. Sometimes in the dead calm of the night she had heard her sobbing and felt inclined to go and comfort her; but "no, she would wait until Mademoiselle Plançon showed some disposition to give her confidence."

CHAPTER III.

AFTER several months "The General" had arrived in Paris. He was a frequent visitor to Evlyn. He continued to talk "literature" and give good advice. By degrees he varied their conversations with sweet nothings and delicate compliments, yet matrimony was a subject he carefully avoided.

Evlyn still admired the man and enjoyed his society. She appreciated his pleasant compliments and wondered what their issue would be. There were times, however, when she found herself puzzled in that she was unable to read him.

"The General" cleverly recognized

those moments in Evlyn, and hastened, without seeming to do so, to reassure her, by word and manner, of his sincerity of purpose and honesty of character.

One evening they sat chatting in the *salon.* Mademoiselle Plançon passed by the doorway, going out. "The General" saw her.

"Who is that woman?" he quickly inquired. He spoke in a quizzical, insinuating tone, just as he would have spoken to a man comrade on the street-corner at the passing of a woman with her ankles exposed to attract attention.

Evlyn's sensitive nature was immediately on the defensive.

"I know nothing of her," she replied, with much dignity, "except that she is my next-door neighbor, alone, and evidently a troubled woman who has

aroused my sympathy. No matter who and what she is, there are few women with a brighter mind or a better heart. I have had evidence of both!"

"The General" threw his head back and gave a hearty laugh.

"I fail to see the cause of your merriment," she added, with a touch of indignation.

"The General" came to his senses. "I beg your pardon," he replied, suddenly, looking serious, and speaking in a tone of pity for her innocence, and with a look of admiration for her purity. "You know, Miss Dole"—he always called her "Miss Dole" when giving advice, "Miss Evlyn" when uttering sweet nothings—"I told you the people of Paris are not the people of your quiet town. Your first experience with 'The Great Madame' should have

taught you that. From the little you have said of her, and the passing glance I had, I am perfectly sure this Mademoiselle Plançon is no associate for you. I have a fatherly interest in you; take my advice and have nothing to do with her. I dare say she is a woman of strong personalities, and her influence over a credulous, innocent nature like yours will not be for the best."

"General, you cannot compare 'The Great Madame' and Mademoiselle Plançon; they are entirely different. The former is an elderly woman of fame, and fortune, and independent. Mademoiselle Plançon is yet a young woman. While there is something mysterious about her, be her life what it may, she walks its path alone. Not one person has called on her since she came here. She has none of the luxuries of wealth, but is evidently a struggling, unhappy

woman. I can give her a kindly word of sympathy without being her associate. As for her influence over me for bad, I do not fear it. You remember when I left you at the steamer you said, 'Be true to your mother's religion.' To do that I must have charity. So much do I respect my mother and her religion, that I assure you there is no power under heaven that could persuade me to do an act that would make her blush that I am her child. I find, if you want influence over another for good, that you must show that you have confidence in the person."

While she talked "The General" regarded her fixedly. When she had finished there was a long pause. He sighed and rose to say good-night.

"Miss Dole, you argue well, but we still differ in regard to Mademoiselle Plançon," "The General" said, as he

went out with rather a disconsolate air. After he had gone, Evlyn wondered why he had sighed.

The next evening there was a great *fête* in Paris. All was brilliancy and excitement. The streets and boulevards teemed with gayly-dressed maskers, while the public buildings had on their holiday dress of flags and lighted gas-jets. The search-light on the Trocadéro stretched out its great revolving arms and embraced the night. The houses were deserted and all Paris was in the streets. Bands of music were stationed in prominent and popular places, adding zest to the gayeties. Evlyn and the old *concierge* were the sole occupants of the pension. The others had gone to enjoy the merry-making and see the illuminations. She had been suffering from a severe headache all day, and feared the crush and

noise of the crowd would make her ill. She had to guard so carefully her strength.

As she was lying quietly on her bed, thinking of her work and revelling in her ambitions, she heard Mademoiselle Plançon enter her room about nine o'clock, after having been out all the afternoon, something unusual for her. The house was dark and still. The *concierge* had told her that every one had gone out. Mademoiselle Plançon thought she was alone. She had been in her room a short while when Evlyn heard her weeping bitterly. Her grief was intense, and she cried aloud, several times calling on the name of the Lord. Suddenly Evlyn heard her spring to her feet, and, as if tearing the words from her lips, say, with desperate determination, "I will not live to see the light of another day! I will drown

myself! To-morrow I'll rest in the morgue—yes, rest, rest!" With that she ran into the passage-way and down the dark stairs, repeating at intervals the word "rest."

It all happened so quickly that Evlyn was at first confused. In a moment she had regained her self-possession. "What! this woman going to kill herself, and I lie here and do nothing to prevent it? I would feel I was in part guilty of her death. There is no one here but the old *concierge*. He would not dare to leave the house without a keeper. There is nothing I can do but go myself. I'll call the assistance of a *gendarme* if necessary."

These thoughts rushed in quick succession through her brain. Without taking time to think further, she slipped a warm cloak about her and hastened after Mademoiselle Plançon. As

she reached the street she saw her white figure disappear around a corner. On she ran after her. She was almost near enough to call, when one of a crowd of dancers in the street rushed out and drew Mademoiselle Plançon into their ring. She wore nothing but light underwear and her night-dress. Her wealth of golden hair fell about her shoulders in great waves. She presented a pitiful sight as the light fell full upon her pallid cheeks and tear-stained eyes. The dancers soon recognized their mistake. They had taken her to be a masker. "Let her go," said one, "she is crazy." "It is no time for tears," said another, and they left her alone.

The crowd had come between Evlyn and Mademoiselle Plançon. The former made her way through its edge and was again on a close chase. She

was within twenty steps of the fleeing woman, when she called her, but her voice was drowned by a crowd of noisy students coming out of a *café*. Mademoiselle's white attire and golden hair attracted them, whereupon they immediately surrounded her, and began showering confetti. Her hair caught the bits of silver paper, giving her a fantastic appearance. "She is the image of her," said one of the youths to himself, as he peered closely into her face; "but it cannot be, for she always laughs, and this woman is crying."

Mademoiselle implored them to let her go, and, like the others, thinking she was demented, and seeing her distress, they turned away. A few, through curiosity, were inclined to follow her. Seeing this, she ran into a dark, narrow street. The revellers, not wishing to

leave the gay boulevard, turned back to their comrades.

Evlyn was discouraged as she stood looking up and down in the dark. She could not see the white figure, yet she was sure she saw her turn into that street. She was about to give up the pursuit when she saw Mademoiselle emerge from the recess of a gateway. It was the entrance to a convent, and she had been kneeling before the cross over the arch. "Mademoiselle Plançon!" Evlyn called loudly. The woman never once turned to see who had called, but at the sound of her own name ran away towards the river.

Evlyn was almost exhausted from the chase, and felt she could go no further, but seeing Mademoiselle rushing madly towards the banks of the Seine, and no *gendarme* near, she felt she must go on, and nerved herself

once more. "Too late!" she gasped, stopping breathlessly at the top of the steps leading down to a small boat-landing, as she saw Mademoiselle Plançon rush to the end of the narrow pier and raise her hands over her head, making ready to plunge.

Just at this moment a boat-load of pleasure-seekers, playing their guitars and singing, appeared under the arched bridge near by. Mademoiselle hesitated. She was sufficiently herself to reason that if she jumped the people in the boat would see her and go to the rescue. That she would prevent, and sank back into the shadow of the little station to wait until they passed.

Evlyn comprehended the situation. She ran quickly down the steps to Mademoiselle's side. The latter gave a startled cry and pushed Evlyn aside, turning once more towards the water.

"It is only Evlyn Dole, Mademoiselle Plançon, your good friend, if only you will let me be," she said, seizing firmly Mademoiselle's hand, while gently drawing her back. The pleasure-boat was passing. Its fairy-like lanterns threw a mellow glow into Mademoiselle's corner. She suddenly took Evlyn's face between both her hands, and gazed silently into it, until both the light and music had melted away into the distance, and then again began weeping bitterly.

"Come," said Evlyn, "you are stiff with cold; there is no one at home, so let us go and talk together there."

Mademoiselle Plançon rose, but her strength again failed her. "Oh! let me go," she pleaded pitifully, turning her eyes wistfully towards the water. "Look how the waters reach out their arms to receive me; they would

rock me to sleep and I would have rest!"

Evlyn only slipped one arm about her, kissed her tear-stained cheek, and drew her towards the steps. She went without further resistance. Evlyn hailed a passing cab and the two were soon on their way home, Mademoiselle's golden head resting exhausted on Evlyn's shoulder. As they entered the gateway, on arriving at home, Evlyn saw "The General" coming out of the door. He at the same moment recognized Evlyn and Mademoiselle Plançon. Thinking he had not been seen, he stepped back quickly into the dark *entresol* until the two women had passed up the steps.

Evlyn turned to see his dark figure pass out into the court. "I suppose he remembers our conversation about Mademoiselle, and has gone away

provoked, or disappointed, at seeing me with her; but I feel I am doing my duty," she said to herself. That was the last time she saw "The General" for a long while.

On reaching her room, Mademoiselle Plançon lay quietly upon her bed for some moments. Evlyn thought she was sleeping from exhaustion, when she suddenly opened her eyes and looked long and earnestly at her, and began to talk slowly:

"I came from nowhere. Is that my fault? I am without father or mother, or even a name. Is that my fault? When I was a child in the convent I did not suffer, for I did not comprehend; but when I reached the age of maturity and went into the world it met me at the first step, an armed sentinel, and demanded, 'Who are you?' I could not answer. Was that my fault?

Yet I was treated as a felon and condemned by society; the galley-slave is not more fettered or humiliated than I. Oh, whose fault is it? How I hate all mankind so that I may reach the guilty!"

With these words she rallied and sprang up in bed with a wild expression in her eyes.

"Come," said Evlyn, sweetly, "don't torment your mind with such unhappy thoughts to-night. Take this wine to warm your numb fingers and try to sleep. To-morrow, when you are rested, we will talk again."

Mademoiselle Plançon sank back upon her pillow. As Evlyn bent over her, Mademoiselle threw her arms about her neck and clung to her pitifully.

"Oh! how I wish I were like you," she said, "so pure and good, so kind

and generous, and always happy! I did not believe there was one like you in all the world! You are but a stranger to me, yet for you alone I turned from death. There was no one else would care. Yet why did you bring me back to suffer? I am so tired, and you do not understand!"

"To-morrow I will," said Evlyn, "but before I go promise me one thing only—that you will never take your own life."

Mademoiselle buried her face in her pillow, as if struggling with herself.

"Don't hesitate, my dear friend; I know life to many is hard, to some cruel, but be brave, noble, and if you will let me I will help you by my sympathy to live. There is a God and an eternity, you know."

There was a moment's silence. "I

promise you," Mademoiselle said at last, calmly.

"To-morrow then," said Evlyn with a happy smile, as she leaned over and kissed Mademoiselle good-night.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning an envelope addressed to the madame of the pension, containing the money for Mademoiselle Plançon's board and an order for her trunk, was found in her room. Mademoiselle had gone, no one knew where. The *cocher* who came for her baggage was well instructed, and told nothing.

Evlyn was surprised, and a little disappointed, but made no comments. She, in a measure, read the unfortunate woman and her position, yet she had sufficient confidence in her to believe, though she had thus suddenly dropped out of her life, that she would keep her word and not destroy herself. Both Mademoiselle Plançon and "The Gen-

eral" became things of the past to Evlyn, except when they returned in thought.

One evening, as she lay upon her bed, with one of her horrible headaches, which so often tormented her, Mademoiselle's last words came to her. "Always happy!" she repeated to herself. "Ah! how little she knew of the sufferings of my poor heart! With a widowed mother, and six younger brothers and sisters to be fed, clothed and educated, and only limited means with which to meet these demands,—a father who sleeps in a drunkard's grave, how can one always be happy!"

Evlyn was like the night-blooming cereus — the darkness of her sorrow only brought out the fragrance and purity of her nature. Her pride was often wounded, and she would seek seclusion, but the moment she was in

company the door was closed upon self, and she went forth a sympathetic, cordial woman to meet the world. She had long since realized that that was the only way to be tolerated by it. She found that the paths allotted to mourners were obscure, narrow, and desolate.

Evlyn had moments of ecstasy. Joy would leap in flashes from her eyes, and she would tremble with excitement. In such moments she was sure of success, sure of being able to make her family comfortable, sure of her place in the world as a great artist. For some weeks she had many such moments. She was growing a little stronger, the horrible headaches came less frequently, and Monsieur le Maestro was so proud of her rapid progress. He took such an interest in everything she did and said, and was so generous with his time

and attention. She sang at all of his class musicals and received the highest commendation. Several times she had been embarrassed in her lessons, by singing for Monsieur le Maestro when he listened without hearing, and at the end would ask her to repeat. At the same time he would be staring steadily at her, or else standing at the window, his hands folded behind him, meditatively looking out without seeing.

"Come and dine with me on Sunday, *mon enfant*," he surprised her by saying one day. "My wife's old companion will keep Mrs. Grey company while you and I talk over your future."

Evlyn was flattered, for she knew how seldom he entertained. He always called her "mon enfant," or "ma chère enfant," and in many ways treated her as such. He spoke to her in a fatherly tone, with kindly interest.

She was as agreeably surprised to find him genial and sympathetic as she was disappointed in the lack of soul in "The Great Madame." "There is a touch of human nature which makes us all akin," she said to herself, "for one finds both the good and bad everywhere."

It became customary for Evlyn to dine with Monsieur le Maestro on Sundays. She looked forward with great pleasure to these occasions. They were no longer only master and pupil, but the best of friends. Added to their friendship was perfect congeniality, an element rare between two souls. For hours they would sit and talk without tiring. Monsieur le Maestro planned a *début* and a great future for her in Paris.

"Were my dear wife alive, we would adopt you," he said, "but as it is you shall always be my *protégée*."

Evlyn felt an ease with him that was delightful. She believed in him, and he understood her. His face always brightened when she came, and several times he kissed her hand as she went away.

"It was the one great love of my life," he said, speaking of his wife to Evlyn. He often talked of her, of how he first met and loved her. "She was a woman like you, with mind and heart and character. She was a great opera-singer, and we sang together. That is the only style of woman I would advise to adopt the stage. To the others it is destruction. For you I would have no fear. The profession would never degrade you, but you would dignify it. I had met many women, but none made but a passing impression until I knew my wife. I had before, in a measure, laughed at and defied love,

but it came to me suddenly, uninvited, and stayed with me. It will remain with me always, for her; I shall never love another."

"It is said that you are fond of your old accompanist, Mademoiselle Delaport, and that she loves you. She is a noble woman, as you have described your wife. Her life, like yours, is so cheerless and lonely."

Evlyn ceased abruptly, for she saw her words pained him. He looked at her a moment, and then said: "Did you ever love, *mon enfant?*"

"No, *mon maître*, I have tried, but it is as Carmen says, love is the child of bohemia and knows no law. I wish I could, for my heart is very lonely sometimes, and longs for companionship. Opportunities have presented themselves, but it has ended by my either pitying or despising."

"Do not try any longer; with a nature like yours it is useless. The source of your life-stream is sincerity, nobility of purpose, strong and refined intellect, flowing on to a happy eternity. A combination of like elements in man is not found every day. There are men of fine material, I grant, whose society you may enjoy, but, *au fond*, if there is not perfect congeniality, there can be no permanent happiness or lasting union. Any other union would be but a form to be severed, and then in death the unfettered spirit would seek its own."

"How many of these uncongenial unions one sees nowadays, and yet many of them get along peaceably, philosophically, making the best of life."

"Yes, theirs is a kind of chemical affinity. You know sulphuric acid

combines with lime, and forms gypsum, but if potash is added the sulphuric acid leaves the lime and combines with the potash. So such persons unite with the best that presents itself, but the moment they come in contact with the more congenial, they divorce themselves from the former for the latter; if not bodily, then spiritually. This chemical choosing is called elective affinity."

"Ah! I see, *mon maître*, and it is not necessary for the elected affinity to present himself or herself in person, for how often I have heard patient, forbearing people say regretfully, 'If only my wife, or my husband, would like the things that I like, or sympathize with me in my line of life. If she or he only had this disposition or that.' They have before them an ideal, and are in a way united with it,

and as you say, in another sphere, if not here, I believe will find congeniality."

"Then you believe in the recognition and union of souls?"

"Oh, yes, recognition after death was proved clearly at the transfiguration of our Lord on the Mount, when Moses and Elias appeared and talked with him. That event helps also to confirm my belief in angels' visits to this material world. There are many who talk of the 'divine revelations of the Bible,' but who will change the subject if asked if they believe in ministering angels. To my mind we have but to reach out our hands to be in touch with the spirit-world. It is only our blindness which keeps us from seeing. Are we not separated from the spirit-world, not by space but by the condition of our being, just as the blind are separated from the

physical world around them? Human nature loves to be deluded, therefore many prefer the slate and writings of unseen hands, a dancing table or message from a dead friend, through a dreamy-eyed medium, at the cost of five dollars an hour, to the still small voice in their hearts calling from the true spiritual world."

"I agree with you, *mon enfant*. There was a time when the Church had distinct and important doctrines in regard to the ministry of angels. I am truly sorry that this extreme material age has in a measure lost sight of them. And that union there, what consolation!"

"Yes, an unselfish spiritual union. As you said a moment ago, the unfettered spirit will seek its own. I understand 'its own' to be as the encompassing love and companionship of

souls. There can be no selfish love there. We have no pure love here save that of a child. Why, I have heard people talk who really believed they would meet their dead love, or some one affinity there, and wander with them alone, like lovers here below, to some shady nook, hiding away to make a little paradise all for themselves."

Monsieur le Maestro was thoughtful for a moment. "And you have never loved," he said abruptly, rising and walking to the window, one hand in his trousers pocket, the other slowly ploughing its fingers through his silvery hair.

"No, and now I doubt if I ever shall. I am too settled in my idea. Look! Coco is beginning to carry arms. Now, if I were young like him I might learn new tricks," she answered, letting their

conversation wander off into trivialities.

"I see I have mistaken you," Monsieur le Maestro replied, with a faint smile at her allusion to her advancing years. "But you sing with such pathos and feeling, and the expression of your eyes haunts me sometimes. I thought you must have suffered."

"Ah! *mon maître*, I have, and do. It is the reflection of my weary soul that you see there. I never let sighs escape my lips, therefore they turn to its windows. There must be relief sometime, somehow," she said, again becoming serious. Then she told him her life's story, of her struggles with poverty, pride, and ambition. He was the only person to whom she ever spoke about herself. He listened patiently and became deeply interested. He could not describe just

what feelings she aroused in him. He knew he admired and sympathized with her, that he felt tenderly towards her as his own. He realized how much he enjoyed being with her, how congenial they were, but "he was sure he did not love her as one wishing to marry her. That would never be." Somehow she was seldom quite out of his mind. Even in his busiest moments she would come to him in thought.

Several months passed, during which time this friendly intercourse continued between them. Evlyn became a connecting link between Monsieur le Maestro and the world he had left ten years before. She came with her witty speeches and clever description of the opera, the theatre, and the gay life generally of Paris. She became a ray of sunshine to his gloomy home.

"I wish I could keep you always with me, as my child!" he said tenderly one day, kissing her brow. "Even my pet Coco barks and wags his tail with delight when you come, and the very statues about the studio, with their serious expression, seem for the time to smile. To-morrow after High Mass I want you to lunch with me. In the afternoon I will go to V—— for vespers with my wife. Won't you go with me?" he said, in a low, persuasive tone.

"Yes, *mon maître*, I will go," Evlyn endeavored to say naturally, but somehow she was choked and could not raise her eyes to his in her old frank way, but let them wander to the pictures on the wall or cast them to the flowers on the carpet.

The "to-morrow" was the anniversary of the death of Monsieur le Maestro's wife. A mass was to be sung for

her in the morning, at the church of Notre Dame, by all his pupils, Evlyn having the solos. She did not understand her feelings, but was somehow depressed about it all. She had left Monsieur le Maestro so quiet and sad. He held her hand for a long while as he said *au revoir*, and seemed unusually troubled. For a month he had not been his usual self. He would meet her cordially, but without a smile. He would stare out of the windows more frequently, and his mind wandered from his lessons continually. Every one noticed the change, and said that it was the approaching anniversary made him so.

Evlyn walked home slowly that afternoon, full of pensive thoughts. The sun went down a great red ball, and the twilight came with its hazy atmosphere and mystic shadows. "I

am tired, no one knows me, I'll be plebeian and rest here a while," Evlyn thought, as she reached the Arc de Triomphe. The five great avenues and boulevards, teeming with life and gayety, stretched out star-like from their stone centre. The many cab-lamps looked like flitting fire-flies far down the Champs Elysée. One of the arches of the Arc formed an imposing frame for a bit of dreamy landscape. Avenue Kléber melted into a misty perspective—rows of lights and a company of soldiers, resting on their guns, in the foreground, the whole softened by the faint glow of a new moon.

"The eve before the battle," said Evlyn, naming the picture. The word "battle" suggested other warlike scenes and the great Napoleon, under whose triumphal arch she sat.

"And this is his monument!" she

reflected. "Of all the great arches, that of Del Sempione, in Milan, Porta San Gallo in Florence, and Titus and Constantine, of Rome, this is the greatest. The ambitious man would not have had it otherwise, and he ordered it as a symbol of his triumphs over almost every nation of Europe. What stupendous vanity! What cruel ambition to erect such a structure to vainglory, with blood, heartaches, and tears. And poor Josephine! How well I remember an Indian summer afternoon last fall. A fitting sun it was, with a mellow autumn sadness in its shine, that cast its rays athwart the dust-covered floors of Malmaison. What a monument of patheticness! Josephine rose like a ghost before me as I trod the deserted banquet-halls. Everything neglected, in a way forgotten. The little chapel, rapidly falling to de-

cay, was most impressive. Ungodly hands had defaced its walls and pillaged its sacred altars. Ah! how often did that unfortunate woman bend her knee there in supplication, her heart bursting with sorrow, telling her God of its weight. I could see her tearful eyes and pallid face, even hear the rustle of her silken robe, as she bent and clasped her hands before the Holy of Holies. Of that sacred altar all that is now left is an empty box hanging with cobwebs. Even the spiders that spun them lay dead in their meshes. Why do her remains now rest at quiet Neuilly and Napoleon under a gilded dome in Paris? and is it so that he now sits on a throne in the seventh heaven and she in the third below? Ah no! it cannot be. He cannot marshal the heavenly hosts as he gathered the troops of men. Like Alexander the Great, and Julius

Cæsar, he was ambitious, and so are not a few of to-day, with judgment dazzled and passions inflamed by marvellous success. How much better we can stand adversity than success!"

Thus thinking, Evlyn rose and went her way, oblivious to passers-by, unable to comprehend the strange mood upon her.

CHAPTER V.

"SHE heard you, *ma chère enfant*, and gave you her blessing!" Monsieur le Maestro said, the tears dimming his eyes, as he took both Evlyn's hands in his and kissed them fervently. "You never sang like that before, and you can never sing better! Yes, it was the voice of inspiration!"

They had lunched, and with the priest, the old housekeeper, and Coco, were on their way to V——.

V—— is a village a few miles out of Paris, quietly sleeping out its existence. During the days of the great Napoleon the Emperor had a summer château there. In consequence it was a resort for the most select and wealthy; but

since the fall of the empire V—— had gradually become a deserted village of châteaux in ruins. Only a few scattered families of limited means inhabited the desolate place. The father of Monsieur le Maestro was one of the exclusives who had lived there when it was in its glory. It was there Monsieur le Maestro had brought his bride, and had first lived so happily. It was at her request that her remains now rested in the little cemetery on the edge of the village.

"You are so beautiful!" Monsieur le Maestro said audibly, yet speaking to himself, as he took Evlyn's hand to assist her from the *coupé* at V——. The situation was awkward for Evlyn. She did not know whether to be serious or cheerful. She felt the former, but Monsieur le Maestro had a calm expression, and talked in a more

natural way than she had noticed for some days. She soon adapted herself to his mood, and fell to talking of the passing scenes.

The sky was a canopy of dull gray, the trees were barren, and no vestige of green was to be seen, save the grand old ivy, creeping over crumbling walls and high iron gates.

"This plant is like your love for her," Evlyn ventured to say, "living when all else is dead, through storm and sunshine, ever the same."

"Always the poet," Monsieur le Maestro replied, with a faint smile. "The trees, the flowers, all that is good and beautiful, speak to you in a language not understood by grosser natures."

They passed an old hunting-lodge, before the door of which sat a lone man smoking his pipe, and stirring a

steaming pot over a bed of coals. Monsieur le Maestro said he had recently arrived there, and seemed to have no occupation save that of filling his pipe; that he had the manner of enjoying his own society, and had surely selected the spot to be undisturbed by that of others.

Occasionally a face would appear at the window or doorway, curiously regarding the passing company, while the hollow, melancholy bark of some stray dog was taken up by the sighing wind, filling the air with weird plaintiveness.

Evlyn had summoned all her courage to keep up her spirits, but as she reached the gate of the cemetery a faint shudder crept over her. It, like the village, was neglected, the bead-wreaths and crosses lying half-covered in dirt and *débris*. It was a small en-

closure with but one noticeable feature, —the marble tomb of Monsieur le Maestro's wife.

On reaching its doorway, he unlocked it and stepped back for the priest to precede. As Evlyn entered, a statue of the Mater Dolorosa, in marble, stood white and calm to greet her. On one side was an altar, with an open missal and a crucifix. The walls were all hung about with bead designs and decorations of artificial flowers. After a short chant by the priest, in a monotonous voice, adding to the solemnity of the occasion, the little company left the chapel and proceeded to the vault below.

"Are you afraid?" questioned Monsieur le Maestro, as they descended the narrow stairs.

"Oh, no," Evlyn replied, at the same time endeavoring to swallow the chok-

ing lump in her throat, and quiet her loud heart-throbs.

The setting sun had burst the thick gray and cast long rays through the stained-glass windows, paling the flickering jet of the sanctuary lamp. There again the walls were covered with floral offerings, and in their midst hung a likeness of the dead woman. In one corner were a small crucifix, two lighted tapers, and a bisque angel holding a shell basin of holy water. Against the wall were several chairs and two praying-desks. In the centre of the tomb was a rich casket, in the lid of which, at the head, was a small door shut with a gold lock.

The priest took up the silver aspergillus and made the sign of the cross over the casket. His last "amen" echoed itself to sleep, leaving Monsieur le Maestro and Evlyn alone with death.

There was a moment of perfect stillness. Then Monsieur le Maestro rose from his knees where he had been praying, and, taking a gold key from his pocket, opened the small lid over the face of the corpse, exposing it to view under a thin sheet of glass. The features were quite distinct, but emaciated. The skin looked as if petrified. The hair was natural, and a few new ones seemed to have grown about the forehead, short and standing upright. The teeth were chalky white, a little exposed, and the *tout ensemble* was ghastly in the extreme.

For some moments Monsieur le Maestro bent over the body and stared steadily into the cadaverous face. Several times his lips moved inaudibly and the veins about his temples became swollen and blue. Suddenly he turned his eyes wildly upon Evlyn,

where she sat, cold, and the tears trickling down her cheeks. At the sight of her emotion he instantly became calm. He looked at her intently for some time, then quietly closed the lid over the dead, uttered a low, deep groan, and sank by Evlyn's side, taking her in his arms.

"Poor, beautiful angel!" he said tenderly. "I was cruel to subject you to this, but I wanted to be sure, I did not want to be a coward! Listen, *ma chère enfant.* You know how I loved my wife, how I love her still; but I have wronged her and myself. At her death, by a special permit from the authorities of Paris, it being against the law to bury exposed to view, I had her put away thus, after a custom of my native Italy. I was crazed with grief, and felt I could not exist without seeing her, even if in

death. So from day to day I came here, clinging to this form, harrowing and distressing my mind. My melancholy became morbid, and I turned inward, feeding upon myself. Being self-centred, I forgot others, left the world and shut myself in, even barring the door to those who sought me in my seclusion with a friendly knock. It is true I taught, and took an interest in my pupils, but why? To fill the days. There was nothing generous in that. When you came, peace to my troubled soul came with you. You began to take me out of myself and I, all unconsciously, began to take an interest in you. At first I thought nothing of the pleasure your coming gave me, but noticed more your improvement in mind and body. I saw the plaintiveness in your eyes less frequent and was glad. You would come to me in thought un-

bidden, until slowly I began to feel you were a part of my life, and did not try to send you away. I wakened up to the realization that you were the only person I had met since the death of my wife whose presence was soothing, and with whom I could forget. What to call this attachment, and what to do with it, suddenly confronted me. I became alarmed and said: I will send her away, it must go no further. Then for a month I struggled with myself, I used every argument against you. Through it all something said: It must have been her, my guardian angel; why send her away when God sent her; why grieve the spirit? Is there not something of false pride in your desire to withstand, as well as devoted faithfulness? She has brought you all good and no evil. Would your noble wife commend this grovelling? Would you

not be nearer her to lift your head, accept your cross, and make its burden light by overcoming? I went to the Holy Book and read, and I found that the most perfect man who ever lived did not shut himself in, but mingled with all classes, from the highest to the lowest, and was in touch with humanity. He did not cut off part of the elements of his nature, abnormally developing the others, but combined them all into a perfect whole. If you bring happiness to me, why refuse it for some false sentiment? That I am fond of you does not make me love her less. She will always be *ma femme* to me, won't you always be *mon enfant?* The quality of the love is the same."

Evlyn was trembling and would have replied, but could not, for her emotion stifled utterance.

"Here are two pictures," Monsieur

le Maestro went on, "one of the majestic mountains, the other of the grand old ocean, different subjects, but alike in their power of inspiration. The man who can but love one thing of beauty in this life is indeed to be pitied. When he is removed from the mountain's sublimity, shall he close his eyes and say, 'I will not see the grandeur of the ocean'? How I thank God for having sent two such loves into my life! Speak to me, *mon enfant*, tell me you will stay with me always, tell me that you love me!"

Monsieur le Maestro gently took Evlyn's chin and lifted her face. Her eyes met his. A strange thrill shot through every fibre of her being. Her dark eyes shone with a new light, and her olive cheeks burned with a new glow.

"Oh! *mon maître*," she began earnestly, "I do not know how to speak to

you, to tell you how I feel. I did not dream such happiness was to be mine in life—to be loved by such a noble man. When I came to you, my heart was so heavy, but no one knew it—I suffered alone. You saw that, and in your sympathy for me forgot in a measure your own grief. I have done nothing for your happiness; you have done it for yourself. I am glad you have brought me here; it has only convinced me of your faithfulness, so seldom met in men. Did you love your wife less, I would not respect you more. I could not regard such love with peevish jealousy. I have been happier since I knew you, and have often wondered at the calm which gradually came over my soul, and the cause of my thoughtful moods. Sometimes I said 'I could love a man like Monsieur le Maestro,' but I did not think of aspiring to what

seemed the unattainable. I could have been happy with you always as pupil, master, and friend, had you remained silent, but not now, for you have opened to me a new life unspeakable! I can never go back——"

Evlyn would have finished, but Monsieur le Maestro interrupted her with a fervent "Thank God!" and kissed her again and again.

Suddenly a soft, strange music, seeming to come from some distant heavenly choir, stole softly into the sacred vault. Evlyn started and listened.

"It is the æolian harp in the window there, to soften the moan of the east wind," explained Monsieur le Maestro.

The two stood and listened together until their souls were filled with a strange holy love and gratitude. Then hand in hand they knelt before the crucifix, offering up a good-night prayer.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning Evlyn woke with a start. She had retired the evening before with such a light heart, the dreary past forgotten, the future so bright. Now she felt a dull, heavy depression creeping over her. She sprang up in bed and sat endeavoring to collect her thoughts. It was not yet day. She turned to the window and saw the morning star looking straight into her face. She rose unconsciously and went to the window, returning its gaze. "It spoke to me," she said audibly, as if in a dream. "It seems to move and have being!" she thought. "What if the stars are the redeemed souls of the de-

parted—if so, how full of good deeds and glory is this one!"

Along the eastern horizon was a faint divine smile that would soon burst into the laughter of the broad light of day. The birds began twittering, some of them sitting gravely, seeming also to contemplate the star. Even the finger-like church-spires pointed heavenward with more significant gesture.

"Oh! what is it—why this heavy heart? Perhaps it is only the lingering darkness; but his love should light me through the deepest shadows. I am ungrateful, wicked. Yes, I will be happy, I am happy, and will say my morning prayers, for the day is here."

While as yet Evlyn knelt there came a rap at her door and a telegram was handed in. "Come at once," it read, and was signed by the old housekeeper of Monsieur le Maestro.

"And this is it which spoke to me! He is ill, I know, my dear one! I'll go to him. He *must* be well. What could have happened to him?" Thus she feared and argued while hastening to Monsieur le Maestro.

The housekeeper met her at the door, weeping bitterly, and unable to explain.

"Oh, this suspense!" pleaded Evlyn. "Speak to me; tell me what has happened!"

Between broken sobs the old woman endeavored to say: "He told me last night that you loved each other, and he was so happy! This morning, while in bed, poor little Coco came tugging at my sleeve. I knew something was wrong; he all but told me so in words. I went to Monsieur le Maestro. Oh, *mon enfant*, it is dreadful!"

Without waiting for her to speak

further, Evlyn rushed to his room. The student's lamp still burned upon the table, and near it lay a piece of paper, on which was written in Monsieur le Maestro's handwriting, "It is well with my soul. O morning star——"

Here the pen had evidently been dropped. On a couch lay the noble master, a saintly expression on his face, and a small crucifix in his hand. As calmly as the sun sinks into the ocean at sunset, he had gone into the great eternity. "Heart disease," the doctor explained.

Poor Evlyn stood for a moment as if petrified, then reeled, and lost her senses. When next she became conscious it was in her own room after several days' delirious fever. For some time after she was weak and easily prostrated. Slowly she became able to sit up, and walk about the room.

She had thought before that she had trouble, but now it seemed only imaginary in the presence of this terrible blow. She struggled to be cheerful and take an interest in life for her family's sake, but could not. Depression on one hand, and disease on the other, began, like vampires, to sap her strength and life-blood with a resistless force. The old pain had returned to her head with intensity, and the sunlight of each new day only brought a renewal of heavy-heartedness. There were moments so full of desolation and torture, when she would succumb for the time and long to die. In this state of despair she retired one night, all weary in mind and body, but her eyes refused sleep. The tedious hours wore on, as she tossed with unrest. Far into the night, from exhaustion, she fell asleep and dreamed.

In that dream she was peacefully resting in a hammock that swung on her own porch in America, where the honeysuckle made the air heavy with fragrance. Lying at her feet was a slender, affectionate greyhound, his paws stretched at length, with his nose resting between them. For some time he lay quietly there, at intervals opening and shutting his eyes. Presently he yawned, tapering it off with a sort of whine, then got up and shook himself, turned around, and lay down again in the old position. Only a moment he remained there, getting up and going to another part of the piazza. Soon he returned and came near to Evlyn, looking up at her wistfully. She sat up, patting and stroking his head. For a few moments he rested it upon her knee, looking up straight into her face as if longing to speak. When

once more he lay down it was with an expression of resigned despair. Evlyn resumed her comfortable position in the hammock and was just dozing, when she heard the dog moaning and whining most piteously. She endeavored to speak to him, but her lips refused to open. Then she tried to raise herself and go to him, but her limbs were powerless; she could only lie there and see him suffer. She knew he suffered, for, though he became quiet, his flesh quivered and jerked violently. As he stretched himself at full length the body began to grow misty, indistinct, until only a skin, looking like a rug, was in its place. The skin was white, with a fringe of blood, and was still sentient, for it continued to tremble and diminish until every particle of blood had disappeared, and then a faint white speck

vanished like a dying shadow. While the animal suffered, Evlyn had also been seized with a horrible inexpressible torture. At the end there was a sharp pang and a soothing relief, during which she closed her eyes. When next she opened them she saw on the very spot where the poor dog had struggled out his existence a tall green stem luxuriant with white annunciation lilies. Standing near was Monsieur le Maestro, in white raiment, his face luminous with love and pity. He uttered no word, but with a divine smile broke the stem of lilies and offered them to Evlyn. She held out her hand in ecstasy to grasp them, when she suddenly awoke to see again the morning star shining bright in her face.

Never in her life had she had such strange, inexpressible emotions.

"What does it all mean?" was the first clear thought that came to her. As she asked herself this question the answer came as if in a divine revelation.

It seemed the star that spoke to her and said: "Are there not as many kinds of men as there are species of animals? Was not this greyhound of a high order, affectionate, faithful, useful, intelligent, but only a dog, not having within him a divine consciousness? Is not man but a slave, like that poor animal, until he has overcome the flesh? Did not your loved one, awakened from his slothfulness, turn to find that his friends could only give him sympathy, and that he must work out his own salvation? Did not he daily struggle and suffer to overcome self until death was swallowed up in victory? The man disappeared and

a glorified body has taken his place. Your loved one sowed lilies, and his harvest is lilies. He would have given you of his best, but no! you were awakened; each must plant for himself his own lilies. Put into the soil the right kind of seed; nourished by the tears of your sorrow-clouds and the sunshine of love, your Father will bring them to the perfection of beauty."

"Oh! I see it all so clearly now!" said Evlyn. "I was sent to Monsieur le Maestro that he might learn to know himself. He was taken from me, that I may understand myself. O morning star, I invoke thee in gratitude! Art thou his radiant soul speaking to me? Thou art indeed the herald announcing a new day, O wondrous light!"

From that moment the old Evlyn

began to die, and a transformation began. Every one wondered at the sudden change. She became cheerful, even happy, and her physical strength began to return. One evening, when much better, she went out to dine, through the invitation of some American friends. Later in the evening it was suggested that they see some of the sights of Paris. The names of several places were mentioned, with the character of which Evlyn was familiar, yet she had not visited them. Her womanly instincts had ever kept her from doing anything abroad that she would have blushed to do at home. Should she refuse to go with the party some one would be deprived of a pleasure on her account, for they would not permit her to return home alone. One said, "If all do not go none will go." It was decided to go, and to the Casino de

Paris, a name never mentioned in polite French society. Evlyn had lost much of her old interest in refined worldliness, and now to go to a place of this description was indeed a trial. She offered no objections, however, quietly following the others.

"You will have a rare treat, Miss Dole," said her escort, "in seeing this wonderful dancer, Stella, well translated 'The Star.' I have seen her. All Paris is talking about her."

"Yes?" was Evlyn's only reply, as she entered the door, her cheeks burning, for she felt herself degraded at the very threshold. The hour was late, the first part of the programme finished, and the gayety at its height. Evlyn's party went into the gallery and sat down at one of the small tables, ordering beer, after the custom of the place. The foaming drink stood before her un-

touched. She was sickened by the sights around her. It was indeed a glimpse into another world. She had lived in such a pure atmosphere, particularly during the last few months, that the present scene was disagreeable in the extreme. It offered a vaudeville performance of startling attractions. In truth it was no more than a rendezvous for the demi-monde, fast, dissipated men, and curious foreigners wishing to see life. It is sad to have to say that there were there a score of Americans, old and young, some of them members of good families.

As the band began to play, the floor was cleared in circles, the men forming in rings around the dancers, all women. Their disgusting movements and display of limbs shocked and repelled Evlyn, but the men greeted the dancers with shouts of applause. The greatest

surprise to Evlyn was the large proportion of elderly men, some of them even with white heads and forms tottering with age.

"Oh, horrors!" she exclaimed to herself, "how can the branches be strong and bring forth good fruit, when the roots are so weak and rotten!"

Soon there was an interlude of some moments, during which both men and women took occasion to drink heavily. Presently there was a sudden lull of voices. All eyes were turned towards the main entrance. Then a low whispering began that gradually grew to a murmur, and louder and louder still it rose, until the whole house burst into an excited cry of "Stella! Stella!" The crowd gave way, forming two phalanxes. The *bâton* was raised, and the band struck up a lively air, just as "Stella," on the arm of a handsome

gray-haired man, marched to the middle of the hall, there standing still, waiting for a special signal to begin.

As Evlyn looked down upon them she started and gave a sharp, smothered cry.

"What is it? How white you are, Miss Dole! Here—some water!" said her escort.

All this passed before Evlyn could sufficiently regain her self-possession to speak. "Don't worry, it 's over now, it was only the thick cigar smoke that stifled me—look! she is going to dance. Yes," she added to herself, "there is no mistake. 'Stella' is Mademoiselle Plançon, and her escort is 'The General'! I remember now seeing her picture in the Rue de Rivoli the other day, with a lot of other famous dancers, but I did not look closely, yet at the time I thought there was something familiar in the face. And 'The

General'! How strange! What can be their relationship?"

Here Evlyn's attention was wholly called to Mademoiselle Plançon, "The General" having stepped back to the front of the ring. Gracefully raising one hand over her head, with a pair of castanets tied with long loops of white ribbon, the other catching up her clinging robe of white crépon, displaying her dainty petticoats of white lace and shapely feet in white kid boots, Mademoiselle Plançon made indeed a beautiful picture. The expression of her face interested Evlyn most as she stood posing, her eyes looking into nothingness above the heads of the breathless crowd. What commingling of emotions was there! No painter could paint it, no words describe it. One would have to be in the depths of despair, and yet compelled to laugh, to comprehend it.

Uttering a quick, "Ohé! Ohé!" to arouse her enthusiasm, followed by a little ringing metallic laugh, which left a stereotyped smile on her face, Mademoiselle Plançon began moving her symmetrical limbs with a bewildering grace. From time to time she was greeted with wild "bravos" from the motley crowd, and when at last she finished and was led away by "The General" the house became a boisterous pandemonium.

"May I not go?" pleaded Evlyn. "I cannot breathe, for the smoke and the noise are torturing."

As she went out she passed one of the private boxes, where sat Mademoiselle Plançon and "The General," over their glasses of beer. Evlyn trembled for fear they would see her, and stepped behind one of her friends.

When once more in the street she

uttered a heartfelt sigh of relief. On the way home she was absent-minded, and pleaded a headache as an apology for her silence.

Evlyn slept but little that night, being oppressed with the strange scenes through which she had passed. She said to herself, "'The General' was trying me the first day I met him on the steamer. That same strange expression he had then I saw again in his eyes as he looked at Mademoiselle Plançon over their beer. From that moment, through his suavity, fascinations, intellect, good looks, back of all I have mistrusted him. I made him respect me, admire me, and had I encouraged him he would have made love to me. Why did he speak so against Mademoiselle Plançon, and so abruptly leave me? How a man of his high position dares to appear in a

public dancing-hall in such a conspicuous manner I do not understand! Oh! I do not want to understand, for such knowledge can bring no happiness. What a contrast to Monsieur le Maestro. This sudden reversion is like being hurled from Heaven to Hades in a breath. Poor Mademoiselle Plançon, I pity her! I wish I could see her again and talk with her, for though I know she is not doing right, I am sure there is hope for her. Pure environments and sympathy can rekindle the divine spark not quite extinct."

CHAPTER VII.

ONLY a week after making it, Evlyn had her wish gratified. She had had the famous dancer in her mind continually, and had thought of and devised many plans and schemes by means of which she might see her. She had about decided on one, when the morning's mail brought a note from the unfortunate woman, in which she told of her illness and begged Evlyn to come and see her.

Evlyn lost no time in going. She found Mademoiselle Plançon in an obscure part of the city, in a back room four flights up. To her rap there was a weak "*Entrez.*"

"You are the only one to whom I would send in the hour of need," she said, holding Evlyn's hand and looking up at her affectionately.

"How different the expression," thought Evlyn, "from the one of the other evening! Is it possible this is the same woman? But where are your friends?" Evlyn ventured to question. "I am sure you have many."

"Ah, yes, when there is strength in my body, and merriment in my laugh, there are throngs who seek me; but when sickness and want come, I turn to find myself alone! Oh, my good friend, I sent for you because I wanted to talk with you, to hear the only voice that has given me an encouraging word, and to hold the only hand that has offered to uplift me; and then, too, I want to beg you to release me from my promise. I cannot keep it longer.

I cannot live to endure such a life. Give me the liberty, I pray you, to end my misery! No matter what the next world may bring, it cannot be worse than this."

"Mademoiselle Plançon, listen. You remember the last time I saw you I had expected to talk with you the next morning, but you disappeared. I thought it strange, yet I did not blame you. I knew you had your reasons. I was sorry you had shut me out of your life, for I believed in you. I believe in you now. The fact that you have kept your word with me is evidence that my confidence is not misplaced."

"Oh, Miss Dole! do not say you believe in me; you do not know. It was because I did not want you to know that I left you, and I knew I was not worthy of your friendship, and that I might in some way compromise you."

"What do you mean? Let us, my friend, fully understand each other. You began your story, finish it, for I am deeply interested."

"I will tell you everything, then if you despise me——"

"Go on, you need not fear that. It is not so much what has been your past, nor what is your present, but what your future will be, that is of greatest importance to me."

Mademoiselle Plançon's eyes filled with tears. She looked at Evlyn a moment in silent admiration, and then began again.

"I told you I do not know my parents or anything of my birth. My first consciousness is of Christmas carols in an orphanage in England. I have always loved music, and this first memory is the purest and sweetest one of my life. Sometimes snatches of

those little melodies come to me now, like echoes from some distant happy land. We were as happy as children can be, I suppose, without a mother's love. The absence of that always makes a void. While I was yet young I was sent to Paris to a convent, why I do not know. That is the reason I speak both languages equally well. At the convent I received a good education, and was well treated, but at a certain age it was necessary for me to go into the world for myself. That I was willing to do, and was even happy in the thought of making a place for myself, of broadening my life. During these days of youth I was often troubled about my identity, and wondered where I came from. One day I questioned the Mother Superior of the convent, and she looked at me with pity and said she had only been told

that my parents were poor and had died in my infancy, adding that she had endeavored to trace my parentage, but with little success. I was a great favorite at the convent, took the lead in my studies, and it was with some feeling of regret that I left.

"My first position was that of governess in a private family. I did not keep it long, after being asked my parentage, which I could not give. The mother raised her shoulders significantly as if to say, 'Bad blood.' She did not want her children reared under such influence. For want of better opportunity I next accepted a maid's position to the daughter of rich parents. She was about my own age. I was often mistaken in travelling for the daughter and the daughter for the maid. The result was jealousy, and I was again sent away, humiliated. I

began to grow rebellious. I had already mingled with the world sufficiently to recognize my ability, even my superiority. Why, then, it occurred to me, was I deprived of the position that was mine by might of right? Was it through any fault of mine? No! I conducted myself as a lady. The more I thought of the injustice, the more bitter I became. And so for years I was jostled about here and there, but go where I would the hideous skeleton of disgrace would follow me, and at the very moment success and happiness would place their laurels upon my brow its cold bony fingers would snatch them away. I became cynical, and slowly a desperate indifference crept over me.

"By all I was asked where were my credentials. And so the little speck of cloud that hovered over me when I came out of the convent kept growing.

"Suspicions, often springing from jealousy or malice in some, would be taken up and repeated as realities by others, until at last the whole expanse of my life was a canopy of dark clouds, and I thought that there was no use, and turned to revenge my wrong."

"Poor woman," said Evlyn, "from my heart I pity you! But you speak of revenge; that word contains so much. What did you do in order to accomplish that, Mademoiselle Plançon? Tell me, for, as I have told you before, I am your friend."

"Well, being born ambitious, whatever I did I wanted to do well. I knew my talent for dancing, so I began to practice daily, hourly, until I stepped before the world a star in that line, and they named me Stella. You can see my name everywhere in flaring letters. I went to one of the questionable places

of this great city, where I am received nightly with much applause. There, for the first time in my life, I felt the exhilaration of recognition, even though of the lower quality. I was put upon a pedestal and looked up to by a certain class. Ah! that is what the human heart craves! I have seen the rich hastily pay off their pauper debts with a few francs, when if they had only stopped and given the unfortunate one hour of their time, their sympathy, their recognition, their money would have been of tenfold worth. Then it was I took advantage of my situation, and used my power for destruction. All that was evil in me was aroused. I wore a smile, the most subtle weapon to success in life. Tears may sometimes move, but it is the smile that charms. I chatted, laughed, drank with men and women, and when I had

inflamed the evil in them started them to the precipice. I guarded carefully my every footstep, using every power to distract them from the danger ahead until, through my influence, their feet would slip, and over into the depths they would go! I am not surprised that you shudder, Miss Dole. You are too pure to even listen to my story, but you asked it of me."

"Yes, and I wish to hear it to the end. What is it that has broken you down both in health and purpose?"

"For a long time I have lived upon my nerves, but they have at last collapsed, and prostration is the result. Through it all, my good friend, there has been a strange undercurrent in my life. Once I had noble ambitions and aspirations like you. I think those elements, through natural combustion, started within my soul a tiny flame

that I have never been able to quench. Since I have known you it seems to burn higher, and I have no rest. You have shown me there is some good in the world. The high will not receive me, however, and I refuse to go with the low ; therefore there is no place for such as I. You may not believe it, Miss Dole, but if there is a God, as you say there is, then He is my witness that I am a pure woman! I have accepted the degradation of the insults of men, my position demanded it, but at the same time I wrapped myself in a mail of steel, making myself strong for the battle of vengeance. Had I fallen too, we would have had to cast lots for the victory ; so far it is mine, but I am weary of the struggle. I have not found revenge to be sweet. Oh! no! Oh! no!"

"How happy you make me, Ma-

demoiselle Plançon. I have always felt, through that indescribable something transmitting itself from soul to soul, that there was nobility in yours. When you speak of the flame of light in you, you have realized the very foundation of truth, the only everlasting. You have only to feed this flame, and it will yet purify and illumine your whole being. Well can I understand your unrest, for 'vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.' Do you ever read the Bible, Mademoiselle Plançon?"

"Not now. I learned of it when younger, but I have been through so much that I have almost lost faith in its teachings and forgotten its words."

"But you have read a great many books in your life, and of good quality. I remember several times, when you were my next-door neighbor, having discussed them with you."

"Oh, yes, I am fond of history, and good literature in general; but ah! my line of life has not been conducive to elevated thoughts. I remember only the other day, since confined here with this illness, having picked up an old history, hoping to distract my tormenting thoughts, and opened it at the life of Socrates. Some of his spirit must have descended into you, for when you spoke a moment ago of that 'indescribable something transmitting itself from soul to soul,' I thought of the great philosopher, for he relied much on divine intuitions."

"Ah! Mademoiselle, I do not flatter myself that even the shadow of his wisdom and goodness has lengthened itself down the ages to me; but I do believe, like him, that one intimation, through a dream I have had, was the turning-point of my life. I am not a

victim of superstitions, to the distorted and indistinct ideas resulting from having eaten a piece of ham for supper, no, but such as 'the thoughts that come in the dark which never come in the shine.' The eyes, closed to the world, turned inward, have distinct visions sometimes of things within like the impressions of the camera. The image is received in darkness, with the eyes closed, and afterwards is brought out to the light of day for finished development. Then it becomes an illustration, a picture of the real."

"Yes, I grant you the beauty of your theory, but my ignorance intimidates me whenever I endeavor to reach up to such distances."

"Then you too have a share of the genius of Socrates, for he realized that his superiority to others lay, not in his wisdom, but in his being fully conscious

of his ignorance. There are many to-day who go wandering about among the stars, and end by getting hopelessly lost, or swim out to sea, beyond their depth before they know it, especially in regard to religious matters. They put a God on a cloud of fire in the far-distant heavens, and when they go to call upon Him they reason, 'What use, my voice would be lost in echoes,' and so, discouraged, they go on in darkness. You have realized, Mademoiselle, that you have within you the divine spark, a ray reaching out from the great sun, the God Centre, making Him ever present with you. Nourish that spark daily by doing your duty, no matter how distasteful, how tedious, and I promise you all will yet be well. You know the wise have decided that to do right is the only road to happiness. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a

little child, and I think the more simple-hearted, the more God-like the wisdom; it comes naturally, like the perfume to the flower. You know well the story of Jeanne d'Arc. A simple peasant, her education consisting alone in knowing how to spin and to tend sheep, but possessing that faith which removes mountains, she led to victory where veteran generals had failed. If, as Shakespeare says, 'we are such stuff as dreams are made of,' then we are well made indeed, when of such 'stuff' as Jeanne d'Arc's dreams—transitory, transforming into the white dove, that was seen, by one, to fly from her mouth as she breathed her last sigh at the stake.

"Yes, the short career of Jeanne d'Arc was indeed pathetic and wonderful. I have sometimes thought we all possess in a measure the power of

insight. Take the every-day casual occurrences. Have you not often thought of some one for the first time in days, or months, and suddenly that one would appear, or be brought particularly to your mind by some special event, in connection with yourself? Again, I often receive letters without the least familiar sign on the envelopes to indicate their senders, or contents, and yet, immediately my eyes rest upon them, I feel their contents, if good, bad, or indifferent, seldom failing in the correctness of the sensation."

"Ah, Mademoiselle Plançon, it is terrible to think of a mind like yours, so capable, being dissipated in a sphere so inferior to it. It must not be, it shall not be! No, I will never release you from your promise. Only be patient, and I believe you will yet thank me for having held you to it. Why

did you fall down before the cross that night, on your way to the river?"

"It was strange, Miss Dole. Somehow your face came suddenly to me, so vividly I was almost sure I saw you. I stopped to make certain, and instead, on looking up, saw the white arms of the cross over the convent gate, stretching out, saying so peacefully, yet so distinctly, 'Rest here,' and I fell down before it, not from fear, for I was beyond that. For a moment I said, 'There is an Everlasting! Oh, had He not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter!' But only a moment was I persuaded, remembering the past, and arose, to hear you calling me. Then I was convinced my brain was going, and rushed on towards death and rest."

"Pardon me, have you any money?"

"Some, but not sufficient to hold out should I have a long illness, and

somehow I feel I won't be strong soon."

"I have but one request to make of you—don't worry, it will only make you worse. You need absolute rest of both mind and body, so leave everything to me. I will send you some books to read, and come and see you often."

Mademoiselle Plançon's chin began to quiver; she could not speak.

Evlyn leaned over and kissed her good-bye, promising to come again the next day.

CHAPTER VIII.

SINCE the death of Monsieur le Maestro it was Evlyn's habit to occasionally go to V—— to put fresh flowers on his altar. She loved the spot dearly, for there she had experienced the only hour of unalloyed happiness she had ever known. It always gave her renewed strength to go there and quietly live it over again, in thought. She did not come away weeping, disconsolate; no, he had taught her how to overcome, and not submit.

It was on one of these occasional visits that a sudden storm came up as she was hurrying back to the station. Just as she had reached the hunting-

lodge great drops of rain began to fall, and the wind to blow furiously. She had no umbrella. She hesitated, not knowing whether to run back to the cemetery or towards the village. The lodge was closed, and she supposed the man had deserted it, for she had not seen him there for some weeks. As she stood looking up and down, debating, the door of the lodge opened and the man, with his pipe, appeared.

"Won't you come in out of the storm?" he asked, most courteously, and in such flat American English that Evlyn was for a moment confused, being accustomed to hearing only French from strangers. A livid shaft of lightning, splitting a great oak in twain not more than two hundred feet from her, decided the question, and she ran nervously into the lodge.

"It is like a Texas norther," he said

pleasantly. "Came sudden and soon, but I think it will pass over in a short while. Just make yourself comfortable. Take this stool."

Evlyn thanked him and sat down, at which he took another stool, and, placing it near the doorway, sat looking out into the storm, having put up his pipe in deference to his visitor. After his first cordial words he relapsed into silence, leaving Evlyn to entertain herself by looking around the rude hut, hung with strings of peppers and dried onions. Much to her surprise, she saw several copies of the New York dailies lying on his hard bunk.

Evlyn regarded him closely. "Have I not seen that face before? It is a strong one. Perhaps I only passed it in the throng in New York, but it left its impression. How did he know I spoke English?" She felt so uncomfortable,

and at the same time so curious, that she ventured to question him.

"I see you have the New York papers," she timidly broke in. "It is rather like an unexpected meeting with old friends to me."

"They are very agreeable companions for a lone man," he replied, without any reference to her relationships.

Evlyn became annoyed at this reticence, boldly asking, "How did you know I spoke English?"

A faint smile stole over his face, and with deliberation he replied, "I can always tell an American, especially a woman."

"The distinction is very slight sometimes. You must have been intimately associated with them to so cleverly discern."

"Oh, yes," he again replied, without further committing himself.

"Do you live in America?" was Evlyn's last effort to draw him out.

"Well, according to an old saying, my home is where my hat is."

Though he always spoke in a friendly tone yet Evlyn felt thwarted.

She made no further effort to be communicative, and a long silence followed, interrupted only by the gusts of wind and falling rain.

The next time she spoke she addressed herself, saying, in a sort of undertone, "I believe it has stopped raining, I must be going, for poor Mademoiselle Plançon and the doctor will think I am not coming."

She rose to go. At the same time the man rose, placing himself in the doorway like a barrier.

"Who did you say?" he said, with quiet emphasis.

Evlyn supposed it was absent-minded

curiosity that made him ask the question, just as she had often asked a person to repeat, from mere habit. She was inclined to reply with an evasive answer, but, remembering her indebtedness for his shelter, repeated, "Mademoiselle Plançon, a friend of mine who is ill, and the doctor. I must be there at a certain hour."

"Sit down, please," he said, with calm earnestness, almost commandingly.

Evlyn became nervous, confused, and felt as if she would run away, but the man stood immovable in the doorway, waiting for her to obey.

Seeing his advantage, she decided discretion to be the better part of valor, and reseated herself. Then he also sat down, and began questioning.

"This Mademoiselle Plançon, is she not very fair, wonderfully beautiful?"

"Quite so!"

"And is she not very unhappy?"

"Very!"

"How long have you known her?"

"Only a few months."

"You lived in the same pension with her in Paris, did you not?"

"I did."

"Tell me all that you know of her."

"That I cannot do. I am her friend."

"Then if you are her friend you will speak."

"I am not sure of that. It is for her to tell her private affairs."

"Listen a moment. I am not as cold and indifferent as I seem, but my profession demands that exterior. Do you see this?"

Turning back his coat the man displayed underneath, pinned to his vest, a United States private detective badge, saying, "You see it is in good faith that

I am interested in Mademoiselle Plançon, and I now realize that you can be of invaluable assistance to me in bringing good fortune to that poor woman."

"In that case I am at your service."

"Then arrange a meeting where I can speak with her in your presence."

"Very well, the sooner the better; this very afternoon if you will. I am going to her now."

"It is settled. I will follow you on the next train. It would not be well for us to go together, for I am not dressed becomingly and would attract attention," he added, with a broad smile.

Giving him Mademoiselle Plançon's address, Evlyn hastened away, full of wonder and excitement.

She found the doctor waiting for her at the sick woman's home.

"She is much better," he said, "and by obeying directions will soon be her natural self."

As soon as he had gone Evlyn began relating to Mademoiselle, as quietly as she could, her meeting with the strange man.

"I know of whom you speak," she said, without the least excitement. "That man has been worrying me for some months. Twice I met and talked with him for a short time, and I have heard of his inquiries after me. But I have heard men talk so much, and have no confidence in their promises. He told me some Aladdin story of promised riches and happiness; only his way, I suppose, of trying to entrap me. Men have many ways and means, my sweet friend, schemes deep and subtle to ensnare women, beyond all comprehension of simplicity like yours."

"But there are some good men," said Evlyn, thinking of the one she loved.

"I hope so," was Mademoiselle's only reply. "But this man, I know why he was at V——. I was teaching there, making but a pittance, when I came to Paris, and it was there I saw him. I suppose he has been hanging around thinking I would again appear, but when I leave a place there is no returning for me. I go to escape the shadows. I do not tell where I am going, and prefer to be forgotten."

"But somehow I believe in this man. I have that strange intuition about him that I seldom doubt, for it has never failed me. Listen to him; it can do no harm. I am interested in what he has to say."

"Very well, then, to please you I will see him, but you will remain and hear all."

"Certainly, and——"

Their conversation was interrupted by a low rap. Evlyn opened the door and the strange man entered. He was dressed just as she had seen him at V——, in coarse clothing and a large slouch hat. His ruddy complexion and thick, sandy beard gave him the appearance of a hardy German rather than a pale nervous American.

"I am very sorry to find you ill, Mademoiselle Plançon," he said courteously.

"Thank you," she replied, her manner somewhat constrained.

"But she is much better, and the doctor says she will be well soon," added Evlyn, endeavoring to make things easy.

"You came to talk with me," Mademoiselle, began. "I am ready to hear you."

"Ah, Mademoiselle, I am grateful for this moment, for your sake. I intimated to you at our former meeting that I was in possession of facts that would bring you good luck." Then he recounted accurately her life, beginning with the orphanage in England, up to her disappearance from V——.

"I see you have made yourself acquainted with me, for every word you have spoken is true. But how came you to begin this research and to what does it lead?"

"I shall leave the hidden chapters for one to unfold who has more right than I. Let me say that I have seen both your father and mother."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Plançon, springing up in bed and clasping her head with both hands.

"Do not excite yourself, my friend, you will bring back the fever," said

Evlyn, taking her gently and laying her back upon the pillow.

"How foolish of me, it cannot be so!" the sick woman murmured.

"Yes, it is true, Mademoiselle, but there is sorrow to tell as well as joy. It is not all as you would have it. But you are not strong enough to endure either much pleasure or pain. From this time on I will be in Paris until my work is finished. Here is my address. When you, your friend, and the doctor find you are able to stand excitement, communicate with me and I will come with living evidence of your identity."

CHAPTER IX.

"WHAT an eventful life I have had in this great city! 'The General' is at least right in some things. I will never be the same! Life has been opened to me in many new phases. Ah! had I a daughter of my own, unless I was very sure of a rod of iron down her back, no matter how well chaperoned, she should never come to Paris to study. The sights that sicken me are exhilaration to some. I have seen young women accustomed in their own parlors to abhor the things that here they not only tolerate but encourage under the appellation of alleged 'broad-mindedness.' Topics which in a more provin-

cial atmosphere would be whispered, even among women, behind a fan, are here open subjects of conversation."

As Evlyn soliloquized "The General's" card was handed to her. Her first thoughts were, "I will not see him. What can be his mission here after his prolonged absence? No, on second thought I will see and study him. Show the gentleman up," she said to the maid.

"The General" met Evlyn pleasantly, as if he had recently seen her, adding a zest of warmth to his handshake. He looked unusually handsome. Evlyn had prepared herself to meet him coldly, but politely. It was no use. She found it wholly impossible to resist the charm of his manner.

"What strange influence is it this man has over me? Only when I am with him do I feel it; when he is gone

it is soon dispelled. I have no confidence in him, and yet he charms me. There 's a subject for thought. Could it be that strange force, animal magnetism, in him? and am I for the time in a measure hypnotized by it?" These thoughts in Evlyn formed a slow undercurrent to their rippling conversation.

"Well, you are just the same," "The General" said, after a time.

"You mistake, sir, I think not."

"What is the difference?"

"I am better prepared to be true to my mother's religion, as you once asked me to be."

"What has prepared you?"

"Experience of many kinds. I have seen, heard, lived much of which you told me on the steamer, but association with such things has made them the more distasteful. Other associations have raised my ideal of truth and beauty."

"You speak so earnestly that you must have fallen in——"

Evlyn anticipated his remarks and quickly diverted the conversation. "How beautiful are the art galleries of the Louvre and the Luxembourg! Bouguereau must have had Mendelssohn's song without words, 'Consolation,' in his mind when he painted his 'Consolation.' He seems, too, to have caught the expression of a Carlo Dolci, whose Madonnas are to me the loveliest in the world. The halo about the head of the Holy Mother is not unlike a Fra Angelico angel."

Here Evlyn stopped, giving "The General" an opportunity to respond, but he remained silent. She always became somewhat nervous with men when they seemed to lose their speech, fearing a serious outburst when again they found it.

"I have also much enjoyed the old Cluny Museum," she began again, to ward off any volley of words he might be preparing to send. But "The General" made bold to interrupt, in truth not having heard half she said.

"No, to me you are not changed. My first impressions are only intensified. I am another man when with you. There are but few women in the world who could stand the test."

"Of what?"

"Seeing life!"

"You do not seem to have much confidence in women."

"No, I have not."

"But I know many true, noble women, not in fiction but in reality."

"Well, you are more fortunate than I. They have not come my way."

"Then I would change my route; that is every man's privilege, you know."

"The General" only smiled, not knowing just what to say. At last he added, "The credulity of innocence; but I admire it in you. Mademoiselle Plançon, for instance, you believe in her?"

Here Evlyn's voice assumed an injured tone. "I remember, General, we quite disagreed on that subject before, so do not let us renew it. I still believe in Mademoiselle Plançon, and I hope soon to be able to prove to you her superiority and innocence. Until then I refuse to speak of her."

"But do you ever see her?" "The General" spoke hurriedly, without thinking.

"Frequently."

"Where?"

"The last time I saw you," Evlyn said, looking him steadily in the eyes, "she was living here, I believe."

"Yes, but——" Here he became con-

fused, impatient. "Let us drop this subject. I did not come here to talk of Mademoiselle Plançon."

"And I did not suggest her!"

"No, it is one of much more importance to me that I would speak—yourself. Miss Dole, I have travelled far and wide, seen all classes and conditions of men; in short, I know the world and am tired of it. I have had all its sweets brought and put before me, I have tasted of each, but they no longer appease. For a long time I have wondered what the matter is, why my discontent, nothing satisfying, no pleasure enduring. I have at last found what my heart longed for, one to admire and love. There is but one thing wanting now, to be loved. I want a home, and in it a woman among women. She must be noble, accomplished, sweet-tempered, and so pure

the snowdrift would appear dark in her presence."

Evlyn could not refrain longer from speaking. "This is a rare jewel you describe. Have you any hopes of finding such a prodigy in this material sphere?"

"Yes, I have already found her."

"Then she is valuable indeed. What price do you put upon her?"

"All that I have!"

"And what is that?"

"All my wealth and all my love."

"But you have had wealth all your life, and it has not satisfied. We should concede to others that which we claim for ourselves. Now, as for your love, how much have you left after all these years of dissipation that you have spoken of? Are you quite sure that it is not an imaginary value you have placed on your jewel? You are an honest man,

you know, and such give value received."

"Miss Dole, you are ridiculing me, and my pride and dignity resent it. There seems to be an unpleasant friction in the atmosphere this evening. I hope you will be just, if not kind."

"It is always my intention to be both. I was only going over your own proposition with you."

"Then hear me. You are the only woman whom I have met in years in whom I have implicit confidence. I admired you from the moment we met, and each day I have known you has developed new charms. You are my ideal. Yes, Miss Evlyn, I love you, and want to make you my wife!"

He came near, attempting to put his arms about her.

"Do not touch me," she said, firmly,

while recoiling. "It can never be, for we are not of the same kind."

"I do not understand you!"

"And I do not care to explain. Only this: I could meet you in society, laugh, be entertained by your wit and intellect, admire your good looks, but we would have to part there. In short, I do not love you, and never could."

His conceit was not prepared for this rebuff. Like most men, angered at the thought of being thwarted in their purposes, as much as disappointed in not obtaining the beloved, his remarks became bitter, vindictive, and he was ready to slay that which he could not woo.

"I had not expected this of you. I am mistaken. You are not the same as when we last met. Perhaps my sudden departure without explanation piqued you. But seeing you come in

one night with that woman against whom I had warned you so annoyed me that I said, 'I will never go back!' But I excused and forgave you, on the ground of innocence. I can do that no longer. You have seen enough of the world to understand. There must be much congeniality between you two, or you would not persist in cultivating her."

"There is, and the compliment is in my favor. But, sir, I refuse to have words with you, for to myself I am still a lady. Let me end by saying I prefer the society of Mademoiselle Plançon to that of those who have higher position only because the depths of their intrigues are not known."

"I see! That fiend has thwarted me in every way, and now she has betrayed me! Oh! how I will grind her into the dust!"

"Stop! you have accused yourself. Mademoiselle Plançon has never mentioned your name to me, though I gave her the opportunity. I knew that she knew you, for I saw you together. Afterwards I made some casual reference to you, to see if I could draw her out, but she only closed her eyes and turned her face to the wall."

"The General" made no reply, but taking his hat, walked to the door, turned, made a low bow, and went out.

"Gone! how relieved I am," said Evlyn, "but what is he going to do? He is not done with all this. Will he endeavor to put me in the dust also? If 'hell hath no fury like a woman scorned,' then earth hath no spleen like a thwarted man."

CHAPTER X.

TEN days afterwards Mademoiselle Plançon was able to walk about her room. That evening she was to receive again the strange man.

"Come," said Evlyn, "I want you to look your prettiest!"

The two friends made a charming picture, in striking contrast, as Evlyn stood arranging Mademoiselle Plançon's hair, Evlyn with her black hair, great brown eyes, and slender figure in a simple black dress, standing in the background, bringing out Mademoiselle Plançon in bold relief with her golden locks and white gown.

"There! you'll do now, I wish I had a camera!"

"What charming *naïveté* is yours sometimes," said Mademoiselle Plançon, smiling. "I am happy just to know you are here, even if you didn't speak. Your very presence brings me calm and rest."

"Well, I do not feel very calm myself just now. I am much more nervous than you. It seems that somebody is going to be married, or something else to happen equally exciting. I always tremble worse than the bride at the ceremony."

"Ah, my child, when you have been through as much as I have you will take most all things with indifference. My fate cries out and makes each petty artery in this body as hardy as the Nemean lion's nerves. Yet I will admit I feel a kind of premonition tonight of something strange to happen."

"Well, we will hope that it is for the

best, come what may. Listen! I heard carriage wheels entering the back court. Yes, there is the carriage, but only one man has alighted and he is coming this way."

A moment later and the hollow echoes of footsteps were winding up the long stairs. Evlyn's heart-beats came rapidly as she opened the door and a strange man stood before her. He greeted her with a tone of familiarity. For an instant she was disconcerted, not knowing whether to invite him in or not, fears and conjectures rushing in quick succession through her brain.

"You do not recognize me," he said, seeing her hesitation.

"The voice is familiar, but the light is dim here," Evlyn half apologized. "Walk in, please."

Thanking her, the man passed in.

He was stout, ruddy, with clean-shaven face, and neatly dressed.

"The Dane!" Evlyn exclaimed when he was boldly in the light.

"Yes, old steamer acquaintances."

"But your eyes and your voice! You are the——"

"With the exception of my old clothes and beard, the strange man of the lodge at V——. The end justifies the means."

"J'y perds mon latin!" said Evlyn.

"But I am here for a purpose, an important one, or rather there is a gentleman downstairs in the carriage who will make things plain. The letter is to you, Mademoiselle Plançon, and the postscript yours, Miss Dole. Are you ready to hear them?"

Each looked at the other without speaking.

"I mean, Mademoiselle Plançon, are

you ready to receive the gentleman? I will take care of Miss Dole."

"Yes, immediately. I want this comedy or tragedy, whichever it be, over."

To Evlyn it seemed an hour from the time "The Dane" went out until he returned. Mademoiselle Plançon gracefully reclined in an easy-chair, while Evlyn sat by, holding her hand. Both unconsciously held their breath as the two men entered. "The Dane" came in last, closing the door behind him. For several minutes not one of the company moved, seeming to be paralyzed with confusion and surprise, for "The Dane's" companion was no other than "The General." The latter's strong figure began to reel. He grasped at the table to steady himself, but in spite of his efforts fell a trembling heap at Mademoiselle Plançon's feet.

"Stella!" he cried, but could go no further, writhing in agony.

"What is it?" said Mademoiselle Plançon. "I do not understand!"

Raising himself to a half-sitting posture "The General" turned his eyes earnestly on Evlyn, then burst into tears, sobbing like a child. With great effort he calmed himself sufficiently to say slowly, addressing "The Dane," "Tell her everything; leave us alone!"

"Come with me, please," said "The Dane," speaking to Evlyn, at which the two went into an adjoining room, leaving Mademoiselle Plançon looking down on the once strong man, now crawling in the dust.

"I have had many cases," said "The Dane" to Evlyn when alone, "but this is the saddest! Not until I heard 'The General' call Mademoiselle Plançon Stella did I fully realize

everything. The story is a dark one. Here are the facts as I have worked them out. I'll cloak them as modestly as I can.

"'The General' is of high birth, and has always been wealthy. When quite a young man he began to lead a fast society life, which he has in a great measure kept up until now. His family in those days had a country seat in New England. Their only near neighbor was a most estimable, highly intellectual, and well-born farmer who, through force of circumstances, had been led to this quiet spot. His wife was dead, and he had but one child, a beautiful daughter, sixteen years old. During the quiet summer months 'The General,' seeking to amuse himself, became a constant visitor to their neighbor. It did not take him long, with his clever speech, knowledge of the world, and

good looks, to fascinate the young girl. At the end of the season her old father came, crushed with grief, and demanded that 'The General' marry his daughter. At first he refused, but, threatened by legal proceedings, he complied, swearing never to live with her after. The ceremony, which was secret, being over, 'The General' offered the father money to take his daughter to some distant country. It was refused, but the old man sold his farm and went with her to England.

"For several years there were faint rumors floating about in regard to 'The General' and the sudden disappearance of the girl, but his wealth and position soon overcame them, and they were lost in the dead past. He made no effort to see her again, but when once in England heard news of her. She had given birth to a child, had lost

her reason, and was confined in an asylum. Soon after, crushed by grief, the old father died. During his last hours there was a priest who came to minister to him, and it was to him he confided the care of the child, telling him none of the details of its life. Several years afterwards this priest was sent to Paris, and remembering his promise, also having become attached to the child, he took it with him, placing it in a convent here. Soon afterwards the priest died also, leaving the child in the care of the Mother Superior."

"From that point I know of her life," interrupted Evlyn, "for I see that 'The General' is none other than the father of Mademoiselle Plançon. How horrible!"

"You are right. He told me in New York, when he engaged my services to trace her, that he did not even know

the sex of the child, but that once or twice he had thought of hunting it up. The thought, however, of bringing upon himself a scandal and a family proved too great a burden to his pleasure-loving nature. So the years went by.

"Somehow lately the thought of it all began to torment him, and he realized that he could have no rest until he had found his child. You remember that he and I landed in England. There we traced the mother to the asylum. We went to see her. Poor woman, she was still sadly beautiful, sitting behind her prison bars. At first she took no notice of us, but after a while, on looking up, she caught 'The General's' eye. For a long time she stared at him, and then slipped out of her chair and crouched in the corner like a hunted animal, shrinking from him. I

am confident that, as far as her brain was capable of thinking, she recognized him. 'That is hopeless,' said 'The General,' turning away, 'let us look for the child.' He left instructions with the keeper to communicate with him at her death, should it occur before his.

"So step by step, most carefully taken, I traced Mademoiselle Plançon to V——. There the difficulties became insurmountable. I met her, tried to get her interested in her own story, but she would not listen. Then it was she left V—— for Paris, changing her name. Had she retained her usual name, I could with little trouble have traced her to the Casino de Paris. For many weeks I was in the dark. It was only the day before you came into my lodge that I learned she was known as Mademoiselle Plançon. I had been in Paris hard at work, and

had just returned to V——, when you and I met, by mere chance, or rather I think that meeting was God-sent, and then I learned her whereabouts."

"But why did you think I had lived in the house with her? I remember that you asked me the question."

"When I had that little talk with her at V——, she bitterly said, 'I would not listen with confidence to but one person I know, and that is an American girl who lives in the house with me.' I am accustomed to putting two and two together, you observe. She had then been away from V—— some weeks, and had returned on business. She cleverly escaped me before I could have a satisfactory talk. It is a dreadful affair, for I remember 'The General' laughingly telling me of the wonderful dancer 'Stella' that he had met, of how beautiful and intellectual

she was, and what difficulty he had in trying to manage her—that she seemed quite out of her sphere. You can now understand why he was so overcome when he realized that she was his own child. I suppose the enormity of his sin for the first time stood boldly before him."

"Do you mean to tell me," said Evlyn, "that this man's wife is living?"

"No, she died some three weeks ago. 'The General' went to England to see her well buried."

"Well buried," repeated Evlyn; "you have spoken the truth. Did he expect to see me here?"

"Oh, no, I have not seen him until to-night since he left for England. I heard he was in a bad mood these last ten days and hard to find. It was a simple note I wrote making the engagement. I told him nothing except

that I had found his daughter, had talked with her, and that she was ready to receive him. He had not expected to find her in such a low atmosphere, for I had told him that she taught for her living, and that none of the insinuations against her character could be proved other than that her father and mother were unknown.

"Ah! and here is another clearing-up, for I asked him once whether he ever saw you, remembering the beginning of your acquaintance on the steamer, to which he replied, 'Yes, quite frequently; I admire her much, but she has formed some associations here that I fear will not be good for her.'

"And so you are the good angel who has made all things well. But I knew that that was your calling the moment I saw you sitting behind that bank of flowers the night before you

sailed. I have made a study of faces, you know, and then I heard your conversation at table, which was a fine index. I suppose I appeared very stupid, but there is method in my manner. I see and hear everything around without appearing to do so. And so," he added, rising to go, "my work, with your invaluable assistance, is finished. I thank you sincerely. To-morrow I will receive my reward; yours is with you now, in a happy consciousness. I shall soon start for New York, there to begin again the uncovering of the hidden tracks of men. This is life!"

"The Dane" had gone, and Evlyn was left to think alone. Her thoughts were full of "The General's" perfidy and the poor wronged mother. "I did not think the human heart capable of it!" she said to herself. "Poor inno-

cent girl, poor delicate flower, snatched from its virgin stem, thrown into the dust and cruelly trampled upon, just when life was blooming into its loveliest! Full of bright dreams and pure sentiments, she spent her emerald May-days with him, wandering amid flowers, listening to the songs of birds, and her heart beating warm, keeping time to his words of love. All the heavens were roseate and her song the whole day long was, no doubt, 'How sweet it is to live and love!' With that torturing half-consciousness that comes 'twixt some horrible nightmare and waking, she had to linger out an existence behind iron bars! And he—ah! how different with men! 'Oh, yes,' the world will say, 'but sh—,' putting its finger to its lips with a significant gesture of feigned modesty. One might as well say to me, 'There

is a carcass in that well, but drink the water and say nothing.' When I refuse they will add, 'Ah, well! there is no other and you will famish.' Then will I turn to the flowers, and sip the dew, a slower way to quench one's thirst, but there is no poison in it. I can see him now, when in some stilly moment the ghost of that poor injured woman would rise before him, an unwelcome guest. He would start to his feet impatiently, but she would not take the hint and go. Then he would try a cigar, endeavoring to soothe himself into indifference, sending out his disagreeable thoughts in rings of smoke, but through all the spectre lingered, until, driven by unrest, he would seize his opera-hat and go out into the night to revel or dissipate, rudely leaving her there. Perhaps it was to make love to another credulous, innocent

girl, or trifle slyly with the wife of his best friend. Or if the occasion was more serious he would seek the excitement of politics or even of religion. Whatever it was he always rose to the occasion. And so I suppose he suddenly turned and saw the sun past the meridian, sloping to the west, and became frightened at the thought that his life was coming to an end, and attempted a sort of death-bed repentance. Ah! well, it is not for me to judge; it lies between him and his God. I only hope he may bring some sunshine into the life over which he has so long cast a shadow, and that she, like the noble woman that she is, may quicken into life some remnant of his better nature. How like a woman! How often she bestows her best affection upon indifference. In nine cases out of ten, if she has a worthless husband she

will cling the closer to him. Are men the same? But what is the use of all my moralizing? I cannot reform society—society must reform itself."

CHAPTER XI.

"IN my old home in America, amid the fragrance of the blossoming honeysuckle, to fight out life's battle! Here is the fulfilment of my dream! Two years have passed since that memorable night when 'The General' and his daughter met. It seems many more. Here am I, paralyzed, an invalid for life, to be wheeled about in a roller-chair. Ah! 'man proposes, but God disposes.' I was on the way, going to claim my castles in Spain, when lo! the invincible enemy, Disease, stopped me and cried, 'They are shattered!' So there was nothing for me to do but return and be content with this humble cottage."

There was no spirit of complaint in Evlyn's retrospection, only meek submission. Long and continued strain on her nervous system had caused an affection of the spine. By rest and careful treatment she had begun to overcome it, when one day, as she ran down some steps, her foot slipped and she fell, striking the base of the spine, causing paralysis of the lower limbs. The upper part of her body remained vigorous and useful. Eminent physicians were consulted, but they all shook their heads and said, "It is of no use, she can never walk again."

"I would have had it so different," she went on in her revery. "I had dreamed of the time when I could make my family comfortable, make a place for myself, and even have the luxuries of life. None of this can now be. As it is, this quiet, prosy town

must afford all my joy. Somehow I felt, when going through so many changing scenes, that things here would seem somewhat different on my return ; but here is the same old grocer on the corner, the same old preacher expounding the gospel on Sundays in a vociferous voice, the grass still growing in the middle of the streets—all moving on in the even tenor of their way.

"There are no changes, except that the town-hall has lost its fresh coat of paint, some new lives have come into the world, and some new-made graves have been added to the churchyard. Somehow, by comparison, things seem dwarfed, but perhaps that is only the eye growing old. I remember, when a child, those steps yonder looked so high, and I said, 'How far it is to the bottom—what if I should fall!' Now they seem so small, and I could al-

most cover them with a double yard-stick.

"And what of my friends here? There is not one in the whole town who is thoroughly congenial with me. I am admired by some for what they call my intellect, and loved by others who give me credit for a good disposition, and yet by all I am considered somewhat as a thing apart. Even my own family does not understand me. The old women knit me into their socks around the fireside, and the men whittle me in front of the store-doors, while my family tolerate my ambitions without really sympathizing with them. Had health and vigor been mine, then success also would have been added. Then all would have patted me on the shoulder and said, 'I knew a great future was to be yours, I am proud of you!' This without having given me before

even a word of encouragement. Now many of them are inclined to moralize on my high notions, accuse me of extravagance, eccentricity, and 'isms.' In short, they are disappointed, yet kind enough to pity me.

"In spite of all these difficulties I have a fixed purpose. I will not allow myself to be discouraged, nor let down to the commonplace, but, praying every day for supreme heroism, will endeavor to create around me a higher atmosphere. My efforts may not be appreciated at first, but I have the consolation and promise: 'And whosoever shall give to drink, unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of the disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.'"

Just at this moment a letter was handed Evlyn. She opened it and read:

"DRUID HILL, CALIFORNIA,

"*July 16th*, 18—

"MY DEAREST EVLYN:

"You see from this heading that we are now established in our summer home. What an enchanting spot it is! How restful! It combines the beauties of many countries.

"Our house sits on a green elevation, surrounded by trees that form arbors of cool shade in spite of the ardent sun. Beyond, to the left, are the orchard, the vineyard, and the orange grove. What an abundance of luscious fruit they yield! To the right all is rustic beauty. There is a large grotto, with a peculiar reflection, reminding me of the Blue Grotto of Capri. It is lined with delicate ferns, and covered on the outside with luxuriant palms. From the tall rock above springs a stream that falls over its side, an ever-

murmuring fountain. Just as the sun rises its silver spray catches the rays and reflects a rainbow. Then its trickling waters wander off into winding streams and crystal pools, whose borders are strewn with fragrant wild flowers.

"Behind me are the majestic mountains, piercing the clouds like the Alps of Switzerland. Before is an arm of the grand old ocean, its waves nuzzling the shores, or beating themselves into angry foam. I can imagine myself in the bay of Naples, with all its wonderful coloring. In the evening a breeze comes up out of the ocean, and mingles with one from over the mountains, catching up the sweet odor of the mellow fruits and fragrant wild flowers, filling one with a dreamy drunkenness.

"Lastly, the full-orbed moon rises and casts over all a sublime and mys-

terious expression. It is then my imagination can see a tall Druidess come out of the grotto, and offer up some fetichism to the towering trees, or the patches of moonlight, penetrating their thick branches, assume the forms of nymphs and fairies.

"Yes, surely this is a piece of God's best handiwork, and yet it would all be as a barren plain to me did I not have with me my loved ones. After all there is nothing in life worth having save love, and nothing worth the giving save love. It comprises everything. It is God himself!

"Speaking of giving, I want to tell you that my dear little Evlyn, your namesake and god-child, has been christened. On that occasion I wanted her to make an offering to the God in whom you taught me to believe. And so, from that day, half of her worldly

possessions she has given to you. That will at least give you and your family a comfortable living. I wish there was more to divide with you, but father, through some unfortunate turn, lost his last dollar in Wall Street. Now we are all entirely dependent on the efforts of my dear husband. He is a self-made man, you know, and not yet old enough to have accumulated vast wealth. But there are bright prospects ahead for him. His interests in the mines are increasing all the while. What a noble, unselfish man he is! How I love him, for he knows my whole story, and took me for myself alone. I have almost forgotten the past clouds, so bright is the sunshine of my husband's affection. We loved each other the first time we met, and now that God has given us a little one we are indeed happy.

"How grateful I am to you for all this! Yes, dear Evlyn, it was you alone, in the great city of Paris, that stretched out a helping hand, and snatched me from the dark waters of death. How my heart bleeds for you in your affliction! If I could only do something to alleviate it. But if your flesh is weak your spirit is strong, and you will bear your cross nobly, I know.

"Poor father is a wreck physically. He suffers intensely with nervous dyspepsia, a most depressing and tormenting malady. You would not recognize his once sturdy frame, now weakened and bowed. His hair is white, and his features badly wrinkled. At times he is very melancholy. I never refer to the past in his presence, but often when your name is mentioned his eyes fill with tears. Yesterday I saw him standing before a life-sized portrait

he has had made of you. For a long time he stood gazing at it, and then burst into tears, weeping like a child. I bear him no malice, for he suffers enough at best. A torturing conscience is written in every line of his face. It is touching to see how he clings to me, like a drowning man to a floating spar. He has lost all interest in gay life, so I suppose we will not go back to San Francisco until late in the season. We have many friends there, and our social demands are numerous, but I prefer this sweet, quiet place, with my own. I know society and its nothingness; out here are nature and purity. If only you were with us, I would ask for no more. How I wish you did not live so far away.

"But I am coming to see you some day soon, and hope to bring you back with me for a visit.

"Write to me often. I am always so anxious—and happy to hear from you. May the peace of God be always with you is the earnest prayer of your ever grateful and loving friend,

"STELLA."

"Wonderful fulfilment!" said Evlyn, as she finished the letter: "And have ye not read this Scripture, the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner."

For an hour Evlyn sat in her invalid's chair, lost in thought, the open letter lying in her listless hand.

The cows, with their cling-clang bells, were slowly wending home. The mother birds were gathering the young under their wings, while the fire-flies flitted amid the deepening shadows. The evening breeze, sweet from the flowering honeysuckle, kissed Evlyn's

brow, seeming to waft her murmuring echoes from the æolian harp in Monsieur le Maestro's wife's tomb. She began singing, to its accompaniment, in a low sweet voice :

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea;

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

THE END.

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